



STRANGE WEATHER



SANTA CRUZ MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY
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Strange Weather:

From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation

April 14 – August 14, 2022

Weather can refer to both subtle and violent atmospheric conditions in a given place and time. Strange Weather was inspired by a consideration of the intersecting histories of bodies and environments, with an emphasis on three key modalities: portraiture, landscape and abstraction. Drawn from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation, the works included in the exhibition span five decades, from 1970–2020. They invite us to consider the way our present moment has evolved from the atmospheres of the past, using a range of aesthetic strategies from painting and drawing to sculpture and installation. With attention to the impact and history of forced migrations, industrialization, global capitalism, and trauma on humans and the contemporary landscape, the body and the land are made legible as paired sites of contestation, offering profound insights about the connections among aesthetics, history and our tempestuous climate.



Strange Weather is organized by Rachel Nelson and Jennifer González for the UC Santa Cruz Institute of the Arts and Sciences.

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We invite you also to Glenn Ligon: From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation, on view at the UC Santa Cruz Mary Porter Sesnon Art Gallery April 14–August 14, 2022.

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Carlos Almaraz

1

West Coast Crash, 1990

Silkscreen, 25 ¼ x 59 ½ in.



West Coast Crash depicts a fiery car crash against a backdrop of cultivated fields and rolling hills. Automobiles were an early harbinger of progress; here, in an abstract eruption of fire and motion, progress has become destruction. Car crashes are a repeating element in Almaraz's art practice, an aesthetic and gestural evocation of how human development dangerously permeates the environment. In *West Coast Crash*, as fire rains down on neatly-tilled farmlands, the implicit critique of the human impact on the natural world extends beyond the polluting and violent car crash, with the flames illuminating also the conditions of labor and industrial farming that shape the landscape.

Carlos Amorales

Useless Wonder Maps 1, 2010

Relief, 39 ¹/₂ x 52 ¹/₂ in.

Useless Wonder Maps 2, 2010

Relief, 39 ¹/₂ x 52 ¹/₂ in.



Useless Wonder Maps 1 and *Useless Wonder Maps 2* each show the black silhouettes of countries and continents fragmented against a stark white backdrop. Land masses are disconnected and rearranged in the artworks, recalling how the historical phenomenon of mapping, including the Mercator map which Amorales manipulates, has distorted the image of the globe. The histories of navigation and colonial expansion through which modern maps were developed accumulate on the surface of these prints, provoking questions about the artificial nature of borders and national boundaries. The reconstituted bodies of land form into shapes that seem almost corporeal—drawing out in sharp relief the effects of human migration and the obsession with conquest on the environment.

Leonardo Drew

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Number 215B, 2020

Wood, paint, sand; Size variable



In *Number 215B*, shards of wood splinter across the wall, jutting out with ragged edges as if frozen, mid-explosion, recalling the wreckage wrought by the “natural” disasters prevalent in our changing climate. The assemblage appears to be composed of found materials splotted with paint, perhaps the remnants of recent tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. In actuality, the sculptural relief is painstakingly made from new, raw materials that Drew has conditioned to appear time-worn. He describes his process of aging the wood through burning, oxidization, and decay in elemental terms: “I become the weather.” Extending out from the gallery wall and spilling onto the floor, the artwork enacts how the built environment dominates our lives but is essentially fragile and temporary. With the artist as “weather,” the grand-scale installation offers a sensorial experience of motion and transformation.

Joe Fedderson

Geese Flying, 2015

Monoprint with spray paint, 30 x 22 in.

Black Ghost, 2015

Monoprint with spray paint, 30 x 22 in.



Geese Flying and *Black Ghost* have repeating elements that almost mirror each other. Boat glyphs and triangles in *Geese Flying* highlight water and wind, across which travel the tree, the human and the animal. In *Black Ghost*, the wide line through the center rains down in red while ghostly images seem to hover in a fog above the red storm. The subtly segmented artworks evoke multiple worlds simultaneously; whether land and sea, an underworld and an overworld, or even the past and present. Fedderson explains that he draws inspiration for his artworks from the visual culture of the Plateau Indians, stating that his “interest lies in the zone where the signs tenuously dissolve into a modernist aesthetic while still maintaining direct ties to the Plateau designs.” *Black Ghost* reminds us that the earth’s past haunts the present, and that all land acts as a site of memorial.

Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds
Not Your Coyote Stories, 2015
 Monoprints, 66 x 120 in.



Not Your Coyote Stories, comprising twenty-four individual monoprints marked with hand lettered words and phrases, resembles a group of protest posters. These are not always clear directives, however. The artwork evokes an atmosphere of protest, with calls-to-action like “Do Live Life For Your Planet” alongside other stubbornly obtuse directives: “Smear the Rouge Claw the Ground,” or “Do Not Hide the Coarse Horizon.” Against backgrounds in shades of blues and greens, language becomes landscape. Meanings accumulate in the deceptively flat technology of the grid. The words can be read across or down, juxtaposing diverse images and cultural references. Deforestation for the sake of human pleasure is evoked, for example in the phrase “Jungle No More Just Polo Party”. Like shadows and light playing across the surface of water, the artwork evokes the mediated nature of mass culture, consumption, violence and communication, raising questions about how perception shapes the social and physical environment.

James Lavadour

Untitled, 2001

Oil, paper, wood; 35^{3/4} x 53^{3/8} in.

Deep Moon, 2005

Oil, wood; 72 x 90 in.



Lavadour describes his process of painting as akin to the natural processes that shape the earth: “I realized that what I was looking at and what I was doing were the same thing...As a physical being, I was an event of nature myself. I could become a conduit for making art, a conduit of nature, a conduit of the extraordinary event.” In *Untitled* and *Deep Moon*, each composed of nine abstract oil paintings informed by landscapes, the implications of people and their actions as “events of nature” are mediated through paint and brush strokes. Every painting forms a unique portrait of the environment; the calm of a pale blue sky, the power and destruction of lava and fire, the ephemeral light between dusk and night. With the varied images assembled into grids, there emerges a syncopated rhythm between earthly molten explosions and the more bucolic, quiet moments of light and land, echoing the human capacity to act as changing weather, with multiple modes of being in the world.

Hung Liu

Official Portraits: Citizen, edition 12/30, 2006

Lithograph with collage; 30 ¹/₄ x 30 in.

Official Portraits: Immigrant, edition 12/30, 2006

Lithograph with collage; 30 ¹/₄ x 30 in.



Hung Liu's *Official Portraits* capture two states of being in the world—citizen or immigrant—and the changing experience rendered by conditions of national belonging or statelessness. In *Citizen*, the woman stands tall, gazing straight ahead, with her chin tilted up, stylistically recalling Chinese socialist realism. Behind her are bamboo reeds, native to China. The background is red, an auspicious color affiliated with the government that symbolizes good fortune and joy. Conversely, in *Immigrant* the woman is shrouded, looking off to the side somberly, while the blue background drips down the image. Corn, the largest crop in the United States, peeks out from behind the woman. Both images contain a Chinese passport, attending to the use of portraiture in the government citizenship documents which either permit or hinder belonging. The rooster in the left corner of *Citizen* and rats in *Immigrant* are animal signs in the Chinese zodiac. However, in the context of statelessness, the signs take on other meanings in an environment made hostile by racism.

Nicola López

Half-Life no. 13, 2009

Woodcut and lithography; 69^{3/4} x 47^{3/4} in.



Twisted pipes become scaffolding for plantlife in *Half-Life no. 13*, snaking out at odd angles from perforated steel. This is a dystopian landscape, assembled from the human traces and debris that, even long after the collapse of society, will continue to mar the topography of the planet. There is, however, an ambiguity and ambivalence in López's powerful artwork about the consequences of collapse. Oversized, blooming flowers composed of lines and angles that appear almost mechanical and diagrammatic, grow from the blue-green sludge that drips from the pipes. They open up like satellites towards the sky. These signs of life gesture towards both the toxic effects of human enterprise and the capacity for nature to reform, adapt, and survive even in a damaged world.

Julie Mehretu

Circulation, edition 22/25, 2005

Color hardground etching with aquatint and engraving
on Gampi paper chine collé; 35 ¹/₂ x 46 ³/₄ in.

Diffraction, edition 22/35, 2005

Color sugar lift aquatint with aquatint, spit bite aquatint, and hardground etching on Gampi
paper chine collé;
35 ¹/₂ x 46 ³/₄ in.

Local Calm, edition 22/35, 2005

Sugar lift aquatint, color aquatint, and spit bite aquatint; soft and hardground etching; and
engraving on Gampi paper chine collé; 35 ¹/₂ x 46 ³/₄ in.



This trio of prints was created in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans, Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. Far from a natural disaster, the government response to the hurricane saw thousands of primarily Black, poor, and elderly residents all but abandoned to rising waters. The etched marks traced across the prints emulate the violent movement of the storm, the people forced to flee—or die—in its wake. The abstract works remain distinctly non-representational. However, lines alternatively sweep across the prints like wind, or they cluster, wave-like, mapping a tempestuous seascape and echoing British painter J.M.W. Turner's volatile maritime paintings. Amid the escalating climate disasters of the 21st century, Mehretu's series offers a poignant gestural document about the twinned crises of racism and environmental catastrophe.

Wendy Red Star

Four Seasons: Spring, edition 12/15, 2006

Archival pigment print; 31 ¹/₂ x 36 in.

Four Seasons: Indian Summer, edition 12/15, 2006

Archival pigment print; 31 ¹/₂ x 36 in.

Four Seasons: Fall, edition 12/15, 2006

Archival pigment print; 31 ¹/₂ x 36 in.

Four Seasons: Winter, edition 12/15, 2006

Archival pigment print; 31 ¹/₂ x 36 in.



Wearing traditional Crow garb, Wendy Red Star poses for *Four Seasons* within fabricated facsimiles of seasonal landscapes. The series references 19th century American landscape paintings that often erased or minimized Indigenous presence, as well as, conversely, the romanticized and staged portraits of so-called “vanishing” Native Americans by photographers such as Edward S. Curtis. More than simply critiquing the historical inaccuracies of these images, the fake plants, cardboard cutouts, plastic flowers, and blowup animals which Red Star uses across these four photographs construct purposefully commercialized images of nature—a tactile reminder of the ways Native Americans and the land have been reproduced and marketed for domestic consumption. There is a melancholy to these scenes of artificial nature; as the seasons change, Red Star’s clothing remains the same, as if she too has been reduced to a stereotype, frozen in time.

Alison Saar
Grow'd, 2019

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Cast bronze; 78 ¹/₂ x 39 x 38 ³/₄ in.



Grow'd monumentalizes the intersecting histories of cotton, slavery, and identity in the United States. Cast in bronze and life-sized, the statue depicts a wiser, more powerful adult version of Topsy, a young enslaved girl from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A crown of cotton that seems to lift her braided hair into a halo as she holds a cotton branch as a scepter in one hand and a scythe in the other, referencing life and death. Seated on a cotton bale throne, she is the nexus where the natural world and capitalism collide: a reminder that cotton production and capital have been entwined for centuries with the lives of Black people. Yet, her upright posturing and regal adornment implies that she is godlike, wielding mastery over the natural and man-made worlds, tipping the balance of power to her favor. When asked, "Do you know who made you?" Topsy replied, "I spects I grow'd. Don't think nobody never made me."

Lorna Simpson

Ebony Before, 2010

Collage and ink on paper; 10^{3/4} x 8^{1/2} in.

Dark Cloud, 2011

Collage and ink on paper; 11 x 8^{1/2} in.

Riunite & Ice #15, 2014

Printed paper collage on paper; 29^{1/2} x 22^{1/2} in.



Each of these atmospheric photomontages includes a portrait cut from vintage *Ebony* and *Jet* magazine advertisements. Watercolor, in shades of gray and black turn a woman's hair into smoke in *Ebony Before*, while in *Dark Cloud*, a man's face and neck emerge from an afro-like halo which seems heavy with rain. For *Reunite & Ice #15*, the hair of a woman bedecked in diamonds is replaced by an iceberg and the silhouette of a man. Under the shadow of the iceberg, the teardrop diamond earrings and the ornate necklace which adorn the woman seem like drops of melting water. What was once an advertisement, selling not only diamonds but also a lifestyle to African Americans in the 20th Century, has been delicately transformed into an evocative rumination on psychological states that double as natural phenomena.

Kiki Smith

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My Blue Lake, edition 26/41, 1995

Photogravure, lithograph; 43^{1/2} x 54^{3/4} in.



To create *My Blue Lake*, Kiki Smith borrowed a periphery camera from the British Museum, which generates a 360° view of a subject in one image. The technology was invented for geological surveys and is akin to flattening the globe into a two-dimensional map. Smith's resulting photograph is of her own body, made into a landscape. Smith hand colored the image—reinscribing topographical detail onto an overflow of human flesh. Maps, which have historically been a globally produced tool for the exploration and naming of geographical sites, but also the domination and control of human bodies and natural resources, here transform into a survey of human interiority. For Smith, our body is our connection to the Earth; it represents our shared biology as humans and our collective experience with the environment. Smith comments, "You're something constantly changing, and that fluidity is not to be lost."

Charles Wilbert White Jr.

Love Letter III, edition 30/30, 1977

Lithograph; 30^{1/16} x 22^{9/16} in.



A love letter to nature, Charles White's color lithograph depicts a moment of bliss as the central, hooded figure gently leans her head back as if to bask in the light reflected from a conch shell which floats over her head. The conch shell is a repeating element in White's art practice, as a symbolic representation of feminine life-force and creativity. Paired with the cloaked figure, it makes the image a double celebration of Black womanhood. Against the vivid turquoise background, the shell and woman also evokes Mami Wata, the pantheon of water spirits venerated in West, Central, and Southern Africa. The water deity became a powerful figure within the African diaspora in the Americas. *Love Letter III* shows equilibrium and balance between people and the environment restored in an image of hope and serenity.

Kehinde Wiley

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Marechal Floriano Peixoto II, 2009

Oil on canvas; 107 x 83 in.



The poses of the two young men in *Marechal Floriano Peixoto II* are adapted from two figures at the base of a famous monument dedicated to the military marshal and second President of Brazil, Floriano Peixoto. Located in a public plaza in Rio de Janeiro, the statue shows the standing figure of a Catholic priest presenting a crucifix to a young, presumably Indigenous, girl. Colonialism has long been associated with religion in Brazil, and directly linked to territorial domination. In contrast to the statue, Wiley's monumental painting entwines the locals with regional flowers, and the standing figure holds not a cross, but a bamboo reed, a plant native to the Brazilian rainforest. Both figures gaze directly at the viewer, rather than down at the ground, and their calm presence suggests strength, pride and comfort in a gentle integration with the natural world that permeates the scene.

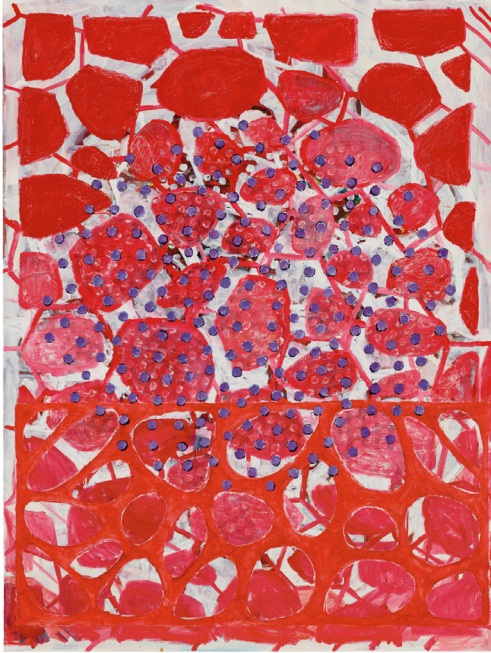
Terry Winters

Novalis (Sojka 48), 1989

Etching, open bite etching, and aquatint; 42 ¹/₂ x 31 in.

Crimson Lake, 2013

Oil on linen; 80 x 60 in.



In *Crimson Lake*, abstract shapes mimic the cellular structure of material life, drawing attention to the molecular elements that make up larger natural networks, such as the floating nuclei of atoms or the stones found beneath bodies of water. Winters' work highlights the interconnected, complex relationships that dictate life on the planet. In *Novalis*, named for the 18th century German poet and philosopher, carefully etched lines resemble the lacy patterns that compose leaf venation, invoking a microscopic gaze. Novalis believed that humans came to know themselves through experiencing nature, and created works he called "fragments" that were material representations of abstract concepts. Winters' work invites us to examine the natural world at different scales, simultaneously infinitesimal and grand, with interdependent systems operating beyond the human register.

About the Artists

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Carlos Almaraz (American, b. Mexico City, 1941; d. 1989) is considered one of the preeminent members of L.A.'s Chicano School. His work has been shown widely, including in *MEX/LA: Mexican Modernism(s) in Los Angeles 1930–1985* at the Museum of Latin American Art and *Mapping Another L.A.: The Chicano Art Movement* at the UCLA Fowler Museum. In 2017 the LA County Museum of Art held a major retrospective of his work.

Carlos Amorales (Mexican, b. 1970) has had solo exhibitions at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Argentina; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Kunsthalle Fred-ericianum, Kassel, Germany; and Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, among others. His work was included in the Venice Biennale; Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil ; Performa, New York; Havana Biennial ; and Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates. Amorales lives and works in Mexico City.

Leonardo Drew (American, b. 1961) is renowned for his large-scale assemblages produced with natural materials. Drew's works are in numerous public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Tate, London. Recent solo museum exhibitions include the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson; de Young Museum, San Francisco; and Palazzo Delle Papesse, Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy.

Joe Feddersen (Native American, Colville, b. 1953) is a sculptor, painter, photographer and mixed-media artist, featured in numerous exhibitions, including at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York; and Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, Spokane, WA. He was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition organized in conjunction with Froelick Gallery and the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University in Salem, OR.

Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds (Native American, Cheyenne and Arapaho, b. 1954) was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as a member of the Humanities & Arts. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia; the Berkeley Art Museum, California; the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York; and the Association For Visual Arts Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

James Lavadour (Native American, Walla Walla, b. 1951) is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell award, and co-founded Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts, a non-profit organization dedicated to the cultivation of the arts in and around the Umatilla Indian Reservation. He is in the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institute in NY, Crystal Bridges Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and others.

Hung Liu (American, b. China, 1948; d. 2021) is a two-time recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in painting. She received a Lifetime Achievement Award in Printmaking from the Southern Graphics Council International in 2011. Liu's works have been collected by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco among others.

Nicola López (American, b. 1975) has received support from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, among others. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally, at museums including MoMA, NY, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museo Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City and the Denver Art Museum. It has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Julie Mehretu (American, Ethiopia b. 1970) has received many prestigious awards including the MacArthur Fellowship in 2005, and the U.S. Department of State Medal of Arts Award in 2015 and membership to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2021. Her work has been exhibited in the Carnegie International; Sydney Biennial; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; documenta (13); Sharjah Biennial; and the 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia.

Wendy Red Star (Native American, Crow, b. 1981) has exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Brooklyn Museum, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, Portland Art Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, and many others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University among other collections.

Alison Saar (American, b. 1956) is a two-time winner of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and also a recipient of the prestigious Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. Saar's art is included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and many others nationally and internationally. In 2019 she received the Southern Graphic Council International Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lorna Simpson (American, b. 1960) is a pioneer of conceptual photography. Her works have been collected by the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; among others. Exhibitions have included the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, documenta XI in Kassel, Germany, and the 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. She was awarded the J. Paul Getty Medal in 2019.

Kiki Smith (American, b. 1954) has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions worldwide including over 25 museum exhibitions. Her work has been featured at five Venice Biennales. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2017 was awarded the title of Honorary Royal Academician by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. In 2006, Smith was recognized by TIME Magazine as one of the "TIME 100: The People Who Shape Our World."

Charles W. White Jr. (American, b. 1918; d. 1979) received numerous honors and awards and has been exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago, Whitney Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Smithsonian Institution, National Academy of Design, and elsewhere throughout the world. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Newark Museum, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

Kehinde Wiley (American b. 1977) has exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Berlin, and Milan, among other cities. His work belongs in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Nasher Museum of Art, among many others. In 2018, Wiley painted Barack Obama's presidential portrait. In 2019, he launched the Black Rock Residency program in Senegal, which fosters younger artists' careers and Africa's broader art ecosystem.

Terry Winters (American, b. 1949) has expanded the concerns of abstract painting by engaging contemporary concepts of the natural world. He has had one-person exhibitions at numerous museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, the Kunsthalle Basel, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Most recently, the Drawing Center in New York organized a survey of his drawings in 2018.