OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF REACH

Trout Museum of Art, Appleton, Wisconsin
April 4 – August 2, 2026
Boldt, Turner, and Crane Galleries
Curated by John Riepenhoff

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

What does it mean to work at the edge of what we can see or do — to press past the point where skill, understanding, or perception runs out, and keep going? Is that a kind of failure, or is it the condition that makes discovery possible in the first place?

Out of Sight, Out of Reach brings together artists from across the world whose practices are organized around that threshold. They work in painting, weaving, photography, video, installation, performance, and conceptual art, but what they share is not a style or a subject. It is a disposition: a willingness to treat what lies beyond conventional seeing as the territory most worth working in.

Some surrender control over what they make. Some push physically toward a vantage they cannot yet see. Some set conditions for a work whose completion is outside their hands. Some attend so carefully to what others walk past — a minor repair, a crack filled with tape — that the overlooked thing becomes the entire subject. Some locate the point of incompleteness where meaning is made rather than given. In each case the work begins where certainty ends — and that space, it turns out, is fecund with meaning.

This is not only how art gets made. It is how understanding expands — how we come to see what we couldn't before, how we move beyond the limits of what we have inherited. The artists in this exhibition have each, in their own way, made that reaching their subject and their method. What they bring back is not just work. It is evidence that the effort was worth making.

These artists do not describe the same idea. What they share is harder to name — a commitment to working at the edge of their own abilities and attention, and a conviction that what is found there is worth sharing with the rest of us. *Out of Sight, Out of Reach* is an invitation to join it.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

John Riepenhoff is a Milwaukee-based artist whose practice moves between the studio and the broader structures around it — paintings within a system, sculpture as social architecture, collaboration as medium — to host attention and produce meaning. He has exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Misako & Rosen, Broadway Gallery, Tanya Leighton, and Marlborough Gallery, among others, and his work has been written about in the *New York Times*, *Artforum*, and *ARTnews*. He founded The Green Gallery and serves as Executive Director of Sculpture Milwaukee. Across his roles, Riepenhoff is known for building structures — galleries, programs, public art, beer — that expand how art moves through the world and who it reaches.

J. Parker Valentine

Untitled (Failure Envelope), 2024

Steel, used lariat rope

Nine panels, approx. 83¾ × 384 × 38 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Misako & Rosen, Tokyo

A lasso holds its circular shape through its own construction. It will always keep its loop.

Valentine hangs lassos, faded and blackened through their use, on light steel frames — the frame like a graph, the rope like a line drawn across it. The result is somewhere between a drawing and a sculpture.

She recently returned to this series she first developed in Texas in 2013, when she started thinking about what engineers call a failure envelope — the point at which a material fails under stress. She was interested in that edge. The moment just before something gives way, or just before it holds. Her work, which most often centers around the act of drawing, stays there.

This nine-panel folding screen divides the room without blocking it. It opens and frames views. As we move around it, the intersections of line and shadow shift. The work keeps changing depending on where we stand.

Valentine (b. 1980, Austin, TX) lives and works in Los Angeles.

Yuki Okumura

Measuring Roman Ondák, 2015

Label on wall

Ed. 1/2

Courtesy of the artist and Misako & Rosen, Tokyo

This work is presented in the form of a label on a wall.

The label describes a piece that may or may not exist. It says that if the artist Roman Ondák visits this gallery and agrees to be measured, an attendant will mark his height, his name, and the date on the wall. If he never comes, the wall stays blank.

Ondák is a real artist. The invitation is real. Whether he accepts it is not something we can know.

The work turns on something Ondák himself made — a piece called *Measuring the Universe*, in which visitors to a gallery recorded their heights on the walls over time, until the room was filled with marks. Okumura takes that gesture and narrows it to one person. Everything depends on whether that one person shows up.

What we are left with is the space where the work would be — and our own imagination filling it in.

Okumura (b. 1978, Japan) lives and works in the Central European Time zone.

Nicholas Frank

BIO I, c. 2007–2009

Oil, acrylic, ink, mediums, pencil, photo chemicals, miscellaneous on gessoed canvas over gessoed masonite panels; frame, platform
80 × 160 in.

Courtesy of the artist and The Green Gallery, Milwaukee

This is the floor of Nicholas Frank's studio.

Over years of working, the floor absorbed what happened above it — drips, palette wipes, paint from canvases made on top of it and now gone. The paintings that left these marks are elsewhere. What remains is what the floor caught.

One person who saw the paintings wrote to Frank afterward. They described the marks as "an expression of attention" — made freely but kept selectively, a record of a practice rather than any single work.

Frank has spent his career asking what an artistic practice actually rests on. His ongoing project, the Nicholas Frank Biography, presents a third-person account of an artist who resembles himself — more accomplished in the telling than in reality. Some events in it actually happened. Others are staged.

The studio floor asks the same question more quietly. What does a practice look like when you see its honest substrate — not the work, but what the work rested on?

Frank (b. 1967, Milwaukee) lives and works in San Antonio, Texas.

Mamuka Japharidze

ᲐᲭTV and OptiMystic Translookations, 1995

Silver gelatin print on ILFORD Paper (edition of 3)
42 × 29.7 cm

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Silver gelatin print on ILFORD Paper (edition of 3)
42 × 29.7 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Bukia Vakhania, Tbilisi and Berlin

In 1995, Mamuka Japharidze disguised himself as a TV technician and talked his way into the Tbilisi communications tower.

The tower had been badly damaged in Georgia's civil war. He strapped a video camera to his head and climbed 270 meters up the inside of it in the dark. He could hear his own breathing and the wind coming through holes in the burned metal.

When he reached the top, he stenciled the logo of a television station he had invented onto the platform. Then he took these photographs.

Georgia was just emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Everything was uncertain. Japharidze's studio had become one of the only places in the city where artists still gathered. He climbed to earn a view of his city at the moment it was most uncertain — fighting through darkness for the right to see and to show.

The photographs show what he saw when he got there.

Japharidze (b. 1962, Tbilisi) lives and works in Tbilisi and the United Kingdom.

Hana Miletić

Materials, 2022

Hand-woven textile (butter yellow organic cotton, corn yellow repurposed viscose, golden yellow peace silk, mustard yellow raw wool, pale yellow organic cotton, red organic cottolin, and white organic cottolin)
Installation: 80 × 115 cm | 1st element: 52 × 53 × 2 cm | 2nd element: 50 × 47 × 3 cm

Materials, 2025

Hand-woven textile (dark grey organic cotton, pale grey organic cotton, and silver metal yarn)
32 × 63 × 3 cm

Materials, 2024

Hand-woven textile (amber peace silk, black cotton jersey, black repurposed mercerised cotton, bright white organic cotton, organic cotton, pale yellow peace silk, and pine green cotton cord)
216 × 26 × 2 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Isabella Ritter, Paris

Hana Miletić photographs repairs and transformations in public spaces. Two pieces of danger ribbon held up by yellow tape. A long strip of multi-coloured tapes patched together. A broken surface fixed with whatever was available, in this case a silver-coloured piece of crumbled plastic. Fixes that most people walk past without registering.

Then she weaves them. By hand, at actual size, on a manual loom from the 1970s. The photographs take seconds. The weavings can take months.

The subject of each piece is something that was often made quickly, out of necessity, by someone unknown. Miletić's weaving turns that temporary gesture into an object that takes a long time to look at. The repair becomes the work. The invisible labour becomes visible.

Miletić grew up in Yugoslavia and moved to Belgium in the 1990s. Weaving has a long history in her family and in the cooperatives of the former Yugoslavia. She has described her practice as a form of care — a way of paying attention to maintenance in the world and turning it into something valuable.

Miletić (b. 1982, Zagreb) lives and works in Brussels.

Naotaka Hiro

The Swimmer, 2024

Canvas, fabric dye, oil pastel, rope, and grommets
282 × 83 in.

Courtesy of the artist and Misako & Rosen, Tokyo

Naotaka Hiro made this painting by getting inside it.

The canvas is twenty-five feet long. Hiro moved across it on his hands and knees, spraying dye and drawing with oil sticks while the canvas was folded and cresting around him. Ropes connected his body to the canvas as he worked. He described the experience as feeling like swimming in the ocean, or climbing up and down mountains. He described it as a way of holding himself in place, as if building something to stay afloat.

The marks we see are a record of that physical process and its constraints. The painting is not an image of something. It is evidence of what happened. Colors and marks function as a kind of code, indexing movement and placement.

Hiro has described his process as involving two different selves — the body that makes the marks and the eye that looks at them afterward. His work often begins from parts of his body he cannot directly see. During the making, these two operate in parallel, sometimes aligning and sometimes diverging. The painting is what they arrived at together.

Hiro (b. 1972, Osaka) lives and works in Los Angeles.

John Riepenhoff

Plein Air (Inova), 2010

Acrylic on canvas
84 × 96 × 2 in. (213.36 × 243.84 × 5.08 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and The Green Gallery, Milwaukee

I have been painting the night sky since 2010.

I set up a canvas outside after dark and paint by the light of a small lantern, sometimes in total darkness. In those conditions, the eye cannot read color reliably. The sky above is vivid and fully present. The canvas is barely visible.

When the sun comes up, I see what I made for the first time. I encounter it the way anyone else would — as something I didn't entirely plan. I am intentionally creating a distance between me as the maker of the painting and me as a viewer of it.

The furthest light we can see with the naked eye is what I am looking at while I work. I choose that over the surface of the canvas. The subject over the object.

What draws me to this practice — and to the artists I have brought together in this exhibition — is a belief that working at the edge of what we can see or do is not frustrating. It is how we learn. It is how we discover something we couldn't have planned for.

John Riepenhoff (b. 1982, Milwaukee) lives and works in Milwaukee.

Devin T. Mays

Flag, 2026
Taxidermy, lumber, drywall, paint, hardware
96 × 192 × 30 in. (made on site)
Courtesy of the artist

Devin T. Mays had a wall built to hold one animal.

The wall's dimensions follow the standard size of a sheet of drywall. Its internal structure is left visible.

Taxidermy is a way of preserving something — usually a trophy, proof that an animal was caught. The animal is gone but its shape remains, displayed as an achievement.

Mays has described this piece as being about the pride and perception built into that tradition. What does it mean to give something a wall of its own? What is being claimed, and for whom?

Mays (b. 1985, Detroit) lives and works in Houston and Galveston, TX.

Anne Eastman

Milwaukee Moon Drawing No. 3721, 2016
Digital c-type print
40 × 60 in.

Milwaukee Moon Drawing No. 882A7195, 2016
Digital c-type print
60 × 40 in.

Milwaukee Moon Drawing No. 882A7175, 2016

Digital c-type print
60 × 90 in.

Courtesy of the artist and The Green Gallery, Milwaukee

Anne Eastman makes these Moon Drawings, as she calls them, by moving the lens of the camera while pointed at the moon in a night sky. The shutter is held open for many seconds or sometimes minutes while she draws blindly, sometimes abstractly, sometimes deliberately trying to render something recognizable. The line is made by the light of the moon as it drags across the lens, and the image appears after the shutter closes.

Photography is typically understood as a document, a record of a moment, place, object, scene. Drawing places emphasis on the subjectivity of the hand of the artist. These works exist between the two. The moon reduced to a line without ceasing to be planetary and monumental. These Moon Drawings were made in Milwaukee in 2016.

Eastman lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Joseph Grigely

Songs Without Words (A Sampler of What's to Come), 2012

Digital pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Image: 23¼ × 30½ in. | Framed: 30¼ × 36¼ in. | Ed. 1/3

Songs Without Words (Bartok), 2017

Digital pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Image: 31¾ × 25½ in. | Framed: 36¼ × 30¼ in. | Ed. 2/3

Songs Without Words (Maxwell), 2012

Digital pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Image: 26¾ × 29½ in. | Framed: 30¼ × 36¼ in. | Ed. 2/3

Songs Without Words (Pearl Jam), 2022

Digital pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Image: 30¾ × 22½ in. | Framed: 36¼ × 30¼ in. | Ed. 2/3

Songs Without Words (Sekou Sundiata), 2012

Digital pigment print on Hahnemühle photo rag paper
Image: 30½ × 23½ in. | Framed: 36¼ × 30¼ in. | Ed. 2/3

Courtesy of the artist and Krakow Witkin Gallery, Boston

Joseph Grigely is an artist and writer whose work is about language and what happens when it disappears. He has spent his life making art not about his deafness, as he has put it, but with it.

These photographs come from the pages of the *New York Times*. They show musicians performing — singers, conductors, instrumentalists. Grigely removed the captions, but not everything. Bits of surrounding text remain — partial headlines, fragments of context that hint at a story without completing it.

What is gone is the direct description. What remains is the body — a mouth open, hands raised, the posture of someone making sound — and a field of incomplete information around it. The sound itself is unreachable. What we are left with is the space between what we can see and what we can piece together.

Grigely describes this as releasing the emotion from the burden of linguistic description. The hints don't close the gap. That middle ground of incomplete information marks the place where creative connection between the image and the viewer actually takes place.

Grigely (b. 1956, Massachusetts) lives and works in Chicago, where he is Professor of Visual and Critical Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.