

NOON Projects Presents

Ben Borden
Bloom

**March 22 –
May 4, 2024**

Opening: March 22, 2024
6–9pm

NOON Projects is honored to present *Bloom* by Los Angeles based artist, Ben Borden. For the artist's second show with the gallery and first solo show in Los Angeles, Borden presents a suite of autonomous self-generating living paintings on glass.

Borden's works are created with an alchemical brew of dehydrated algae, potassium ferrocyanide, glycerin, and steel, a technique the artist has been developing since 2018. In a layer of bioplastic on the back of glass or carved acrylic, Borden establishes the boundaries for the chemical reaction that produces Prussian blue, the first synthetically created pigment. The works' fluid, mercurial images can take months and even years to develop into a resolved state and necessitate a patient balance between care, maintenance and ambivalence. The last step in creation involves the artist sealing his petri-like paintings, creating an airtight chamber slowing the chemical transformations to a glacial pace.

NOON Projects is a gallery in Chinatown, Los Angeles. Our program showcases artists who work from the heart, with a focus on queerness, the divine, the natural world, craft, and social practices. We host an ongoing program of dinners, concerts, meditation groups, and community happenings.

We aim to create a welcoming space for artists and the community to connect and flourish. Please come by and see us – you are very welcome here.

NOON Projects
951 Chung King Road
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Thursday to Saturday
Noon–6pm
And by Appointment

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NOON

Ben Borden
Bloom

Text by
Sophia Weltman

Bloom became a verb as time collapsed with the advent of modern imaging technology. Through the use of early time-lapse photography, F. Percy Smith's silent film, *The Birth of a Flower* (1910), told the secrets of petals unfurling. Images that expose time as a series of blinking flashes reveal the flimsiness of a static being and stable present. The mythology of a moment so precariously situated between the past and future laid bare.

In his first solo show in Los Angeles, Ben Borden offers ever-becoming algae paintings that, from their autonomy, continuously confront time as a measure of change. Each painting belonging to "Bloom" owes its origins to a mixture of dehydrated algae, potassium ferrocyanide and glycerin; a technique Borden has been developing since 2018. Between panes of glass and substrates of bioplastic, Borden establishes the boundaries for chemical transitions that produce the fluid, mercurial surfaces of his works.

Atop these chemical and organic beds, Borden places precisely cut steel plates to initiate reactions that bleed Prussian blue. The first synthetic pigment is encountered as the steel's thoughtful edges become the site of Borden's restrained authorship. Like the alchemist who happened upon that blue pigment centuries ago, Borden allows himself to be surprised by his works' autopoietic production. In the face of self-generating systems and artificial intelligence, gaps in understanding arise and the creator is as uneasily singular as the creation is predictable.

As Borden's reactions evolve from their self-generating states, something akin to *acheiropoietos*— icons made without the human hand— emerge. In the tenth century images attributed only to light and grace, allowed people to see what even angels could not imagine. Later, the invention of photography located sacredness in the chemical miracle. Here, Borden summons materials that have migrated between industrial, medical and fine art use, to establish the grounds for revelations as the stains of microbial life unendingly appear.

The intensities that define the moments of Borden's paintings are the results of collisions between relinquished and reclaimed authorship. The works can take months and even years to gestate to a resolved state and necessitate a patient balance between care, maintenance and ambivalence. In his last act of provisional intervention, Borden seals his petri-like paintings with layers of epoxy and silicon, creating an air-tight, water-tight chamber that subjects the chemical changes enclosed within to a much slower rate. Deprived of catalyzing elements, the lives of the work are tempered, but not entirely thwarted. A vital endurance ensures perpetual flush.

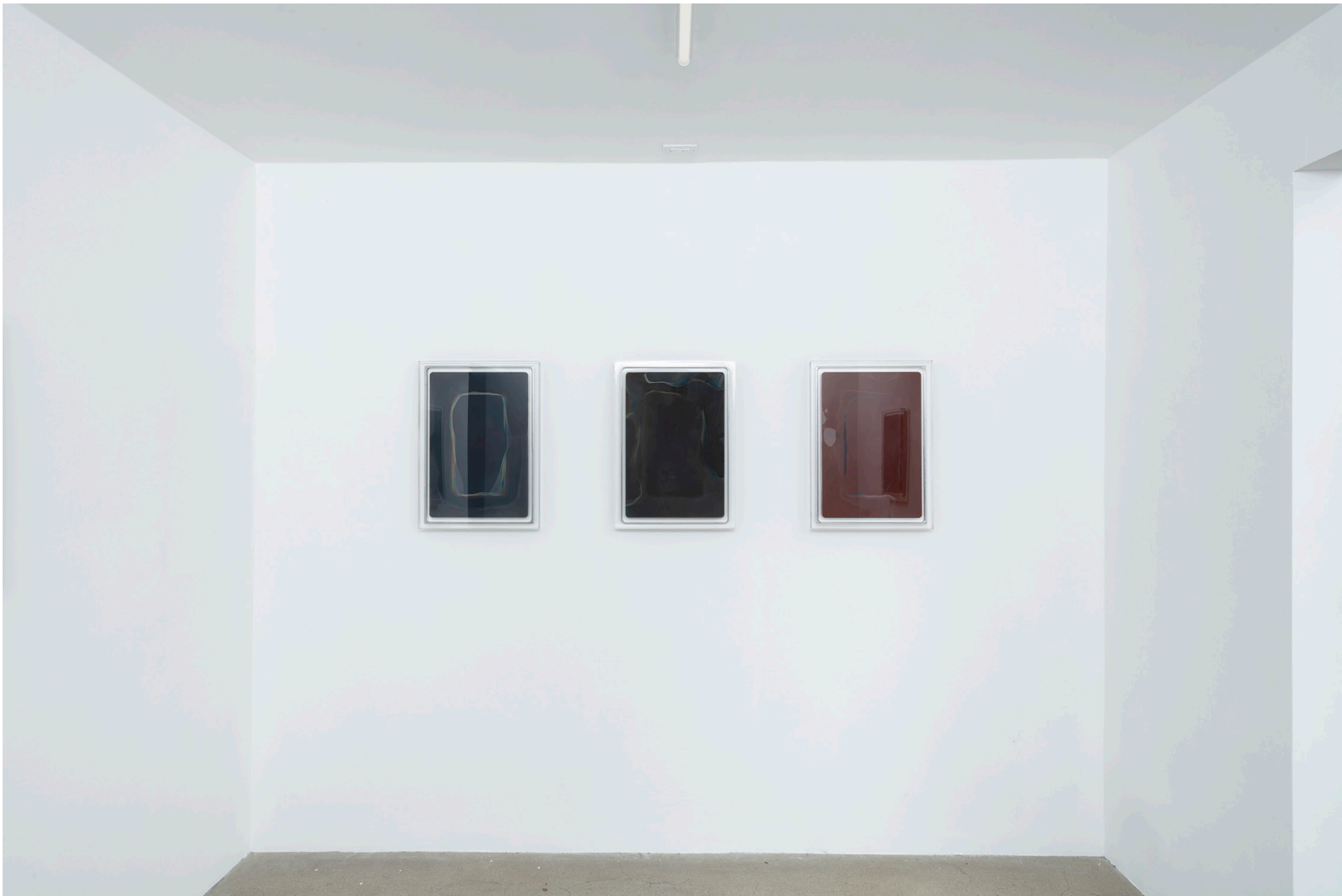
From their continual evolution, Borden's paintings exist in the memory of Joshua Reynolds, the famed 18th century portrait artist whose pigments were prized for their unstable nature. A morning sun was known to melt Reynolds' tint. Reds that faded to gray within a lifetime made the canvas a unit for a temporal alternative to the budding capitalist notion of factory time that accompanied industrialization. In a similar resistance to dominant temporalities, Borden's paintings deny the image its role as guardian of a singular moment.

"Bloom" exists in the spaces between autopoietic and induced creation. The residues of Borden's reactions are formally captivating in ways possible to appreciate during a passing encounter. There is serenity to be found in the blurred edges and organic shapes, and the meticulous precision held in the craftsmanship of the works' frames. However, the ever-changing natures of the paintings present an invitation to stay with ceaseless becoming that most rewards sustained engagement.













Ben Borden
102723, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
102723 (*Detail*), 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
101623, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm

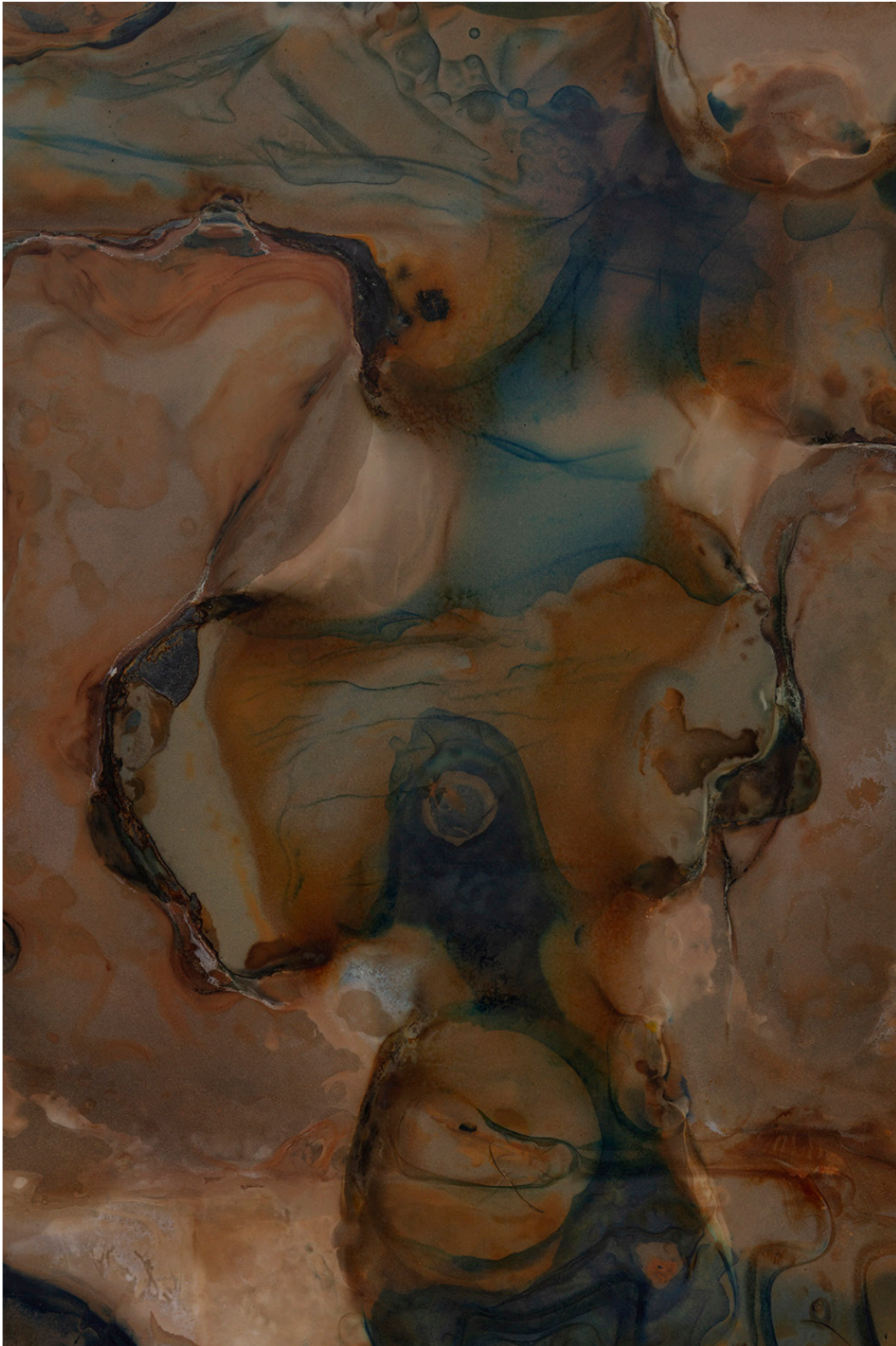


Ben Borden
101623 (Detail), 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
032223, 2024

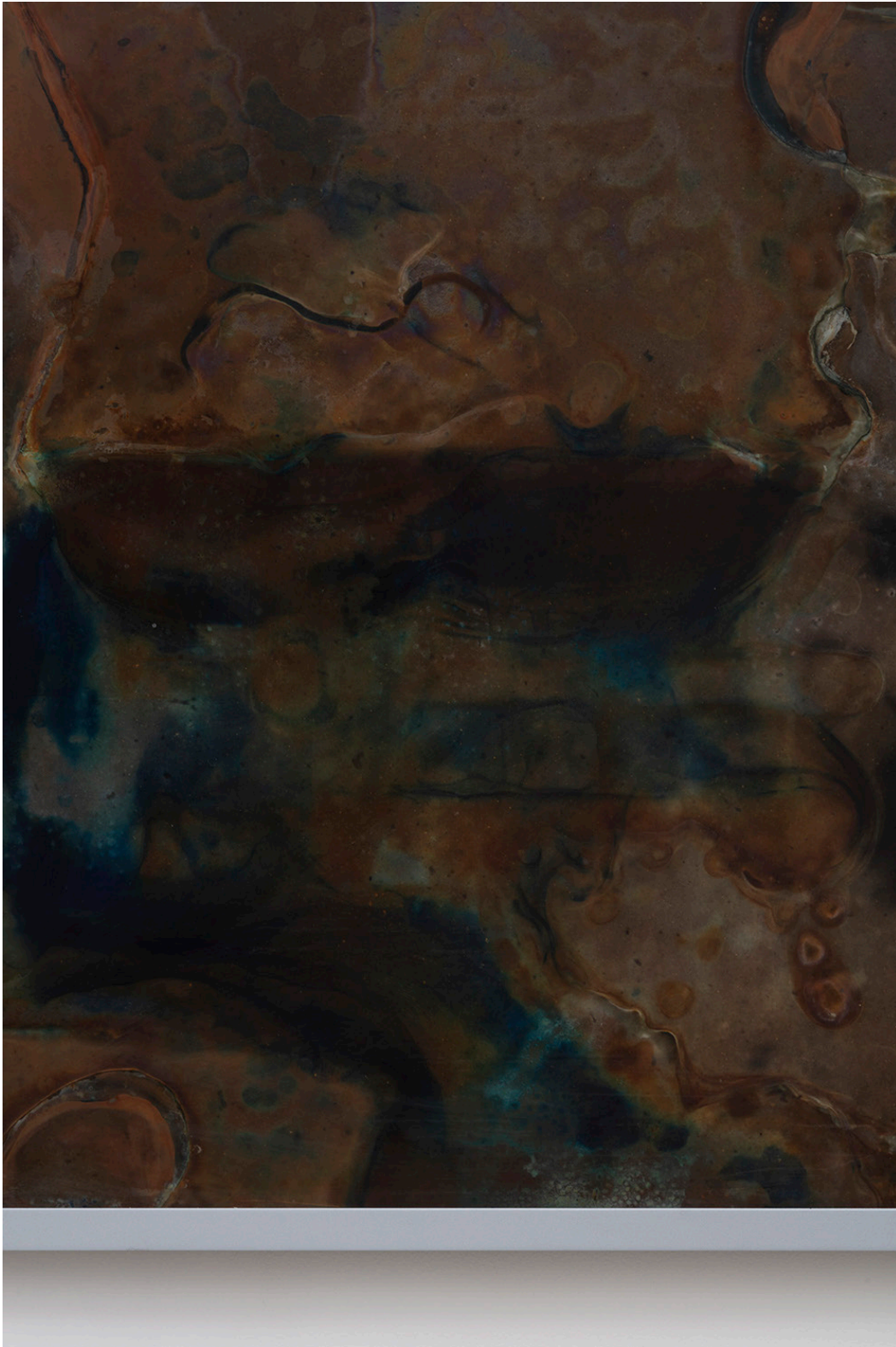
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
032223 (*Detail*), 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
050223, 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
050223 (Detail), 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
092023, 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
092023 (Detail), 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, acid etch glass, powder
coated aluminum artist frame
58 ½ x 48 in. | 148.5 x 122 cm



Ben Borden
011524, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
021524, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
030824, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
012024, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
010924, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
020424, 2024
Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
020424, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
030424, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
020424, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm



Ben Borden
031424, 2024

Active chemical reaction suspended in bio-polymer, steel, machined acrylic
23 ¼ x 16 ½ x 1 ½ in. | 59 x 41 x 3.8 cm

CV

Ben Borden

Ben Borden (b. 1985 Corpus Christi, Texas) is an artist and educator who lives in Los Angeles and works in the City of Commerce, California. He leverages industrial processes and organic materials to create closed systems of control and preservation reflective of impermanence and faith. Borden teaches in the Media Design Practices MFA program at ArtCenter College of Design in Los Angeles.

Education

2018 Masters of Science, ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, CA
2016 Graduate Certificate, Concordia University, Irvine, CA
2010 Bachelors of Arts, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

Select Solo & 2-Person Exhibitions

2024 *Bloom*, NOON Projects, Los Angeles, CA
2022 *Angel Pierced* (2-Person show with Anja Salonen), NOON Projects, Los Angeles, CA
2019 *Abeyance* (2-Person show with Maria Petschnig), As It Stands, Los Angeles, CA
2018 *Made to Look Natural* (2-Person show with Zoe Koke), Smart Objects, Los Angeles, CA

Group Exhibitions

2015 Getty Research Center, Los Angeles, CA
2014 Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal
Transmediale Festival, Berlin

Awards, Fellowships & Scholarships

2018 ArtCenter Graduate Fellowship
2016 ArtCenter MFA Scholarship
Pritzker Scholarship Award
2015 Dora and Avi Morrow Fellowship

Press

2023 "Tiwa Select's New London Exhibition Spotlights the Next Generation of American Design Talent," VOGUE
"The North American Pavilion," FRIEZE
2013 "Discovery: Solar Year," Nathan Reese, Interview Magazine

Experience

2022 Visiting Faculty, Royal Academy of Fine Art Antwerp, Belgium
2020 Design Consultant, Metabolic Studio, Los Angeles
2019 Media Design Practices MFA, Adjunct Faculty, ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, CA (2019–Present)
2018 Designer/Fabricator, Machine Histories (2018–Present)
2015 Co-director and Designer, 820plaza, Montreal, Quebec
2013 Artist and Research Assistant, Matt Goerzen Studio
2011 Solar Year, Ben Borden and David Ertel electronic pop duo