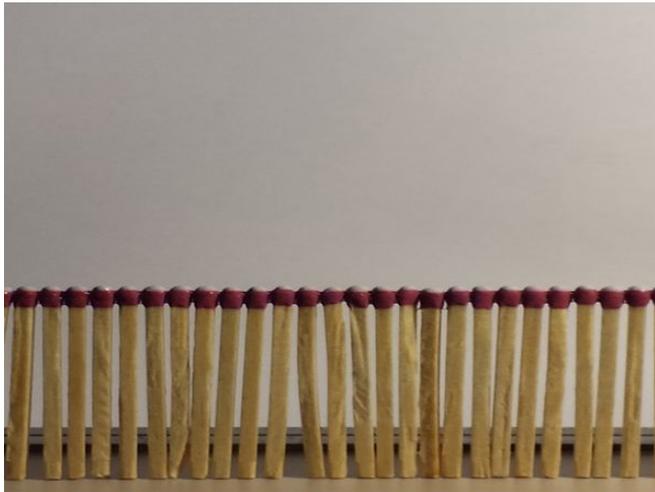


# VBS Opens in Usdan

SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

*VBS (violet burning sunset)* will highlight both notable and up-and-coming Bennington artists. The show is the capstone event of a year-long celebration of the 40th anniversary of College's Visual and Performing Arts building, bringing together artists who studied and worked in that space—a mix of both established and emerging international artists.



**Ethan Knechel** *Us/Them*, 2016 Matches and cyanoacrylate 33' x 2.5" x .1"

The exhibition opens Tuesday, September 20 and runs through Sunday, October 16; opening hours of Usdan Gallery are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 5 pm. A number of gallery talks and receptions, including over Bennington's All-Class Reunion and Family Weekend (September 23-25), will take place during its run.

VBS consists of two shows in one room. The first show features work by Ethan Knechel '08, Helen Mirra '91, Tom Sachs '89, Lauren Seiden '03 and Alison Veit '11 and consists entirely of artworks that eschew color and embrace solid materiality in mostly muted and gray tones. The second features work by Amanda Church '76, Martha Grover '02, Odili Donald Odita MFA '90, Devin O'Brien Power '05, and Cyle Metzger '08. These artists employ color and illusionistic space to an intense effect, and often allow vivid palettes to invite metaphysical interpretations. The exhibition is “a celebration of very-well-made objects” and will feel to the viewer like a prism projecting multicolored refractions from one side of Usdan to the other.

The exhibition is curated by Todd Von Ammon '09. “My interest was always to talk about the art,” he says of his time at Bennington. “The fun and challenging aspect of this show was the gradual discovery that no two alumni seem to be doing anything even remotely alike, which makes an alumni group show no easy task. It's also the tip of the iceberg in terms of what's being made nationwide and worldwide by the alumni of the school.”

## **Events**

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

7:00 pm: Gallery Talk by curator Todd Von Ammon '09 and artist Cyle Metzger '08

Saturday, September 24, 2016

3:30-4:30 pm: Artists talk with Odili Donald Odita MFA '90, Devin O'Brien Power '05, and Lauren Seiden '03

5:00-6:30pm: Opening reception

**Amanda Church** is a painter living and working in New York City. Her work's overarching Pop ethos references the body in landscape; her most recent paintings veer toward figuration, with recognizable body parts populating what remains an essentially abstract arena. Following on the heels of her

Heads and Tales show of reductive portraiture in 2015 at Espacio 20/20 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Church's latest work leaves the head behind to focus instead on other parts of the body, specifically arms, legs, and hands. Some of these paintings evince the feel of the seashore and were in fact drawn from photos of friends sitting by the ocean. An intimation of the horizon line is often present, as is an intangible eroticism. The tube paintings—hands holding paint tubes aloft—are more self-referential, conveying a totemic artist-in-the-studio sensation of isolation and excitement at once. The distortion of the figure in all the works is mitigated by their sunny Pop sensibility.

**Martha Grover** is a functional potter, living in Bethel, Maine, creating thrown and altered porcelain pieces. She received an undergraduate degree in architecture from Bennington College, and an MFA in ceramics from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She has been awarded multiple residencies and fellowships including the Fogelberg Fellowship at the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, Sage Scholarship and Taunt Fellowship at the Archie Bray Foundation, and a yearlong residency at Red Lodge Clay Center. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, and can be found at galleries across the country; it has also been featured in publications including *Ceramics Monthly*, *Clay Times*, *Pottery Making Illustrated*, the Lark 500 series, and was the cover feature of *Ceramic Monthly's* May 2010 issue.

**Ethan Knechel** is a sculptor, chef, aspiring farmer and machinist. After graduating from Bennington College in 2008, Ethan completed an intern artist residency at Franconia Sculpture Park. He moved to New York City where he participated in the live/work space Secret Works in Brooklyn, co-founded Secret Restaurant, presented inflatable sculptures with AUNTS, and fabricated a chandelier for his wife Megan Byrne. Ethan has cooked for several renowned chefs and his sculptures have been shown at Franconia Sculpture Park, Josephine Sculpture Park, the Soo Visual Art Center, The New Museum, and Secret Works. Ethan now cooks and tends to land and animals at Mount Tremper Arts in the Catskills where he lives with his wife and son.

**Cyle Metzger** graduated from Bennington in 2008 and went on to receive an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2010 and an MA from the University of California, Riverside. He is currently working on a PhD in art history and feminist and gender studies at Stanford University. He has taught studio courses at Townson and George Mason Universities.

**Helen Mirra** Mirra's major recent solo exhibitions include *Habitat de Transição* at Culturgest, Lisbon (2014); *Hourly Directional* at Radcliffe Center for Advanced Study, Cambridge, and the MIT List Visual Arts Center (both 2014); *gehend* (Field Recordings 1-3), which was held at three venues: Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and Bonner Kunstverein (2011–2012). Mirra has been awarded many grants and fellowships, including the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst Künstlerprogramm) in Berlin; IASPIS (International Artists Studio Program in Sweden) Stockholm; Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue; and Civitella Ranieri, Umbria.

**Odili Donald Odita** is a Nigerian-born, Philadelphia-based abstract painter whose work has been shown in museums and art institutions around the globe. In recent years, Odita has been commissioned to paint several large-scale wall installations including The United States Mission to the United Nations in New York (2011), the Savannah College of Art and Design (2012), New York Presbyterian Hospital (2012), New Orleans Museum of Art (2011), Kiasma, Helsinki (2011), and the George C. Young Federal Building and Courthouse in Orlando, Florida (2013). Odita's work, which explores color both in the figurative art historical context and also in the sociopolitical sense, has been the subject of several solo exhibitions including Savannah College of Art and Design; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Studio Museum in Harlem; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita; and Princeton University. He received a Penny McCall Foundation grant in 1994, a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant in 2001, and a Louis Comfort Tiffany grant in 2007. In 2007, his large installation *Give Me Shelter* was featured prominently in the

52nd Venice Biennale exhibition Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind, curated by Robert Storr.

**Devin O'Brien Power** graduated Bennington in 2005 and then moved to New York to get an MFA degree in painting and drawing from Brooklyn College. He divides his time between New York and New England. Power has been exhibiting his art for over a decade. His second solo exhibition in 2015 was reviewed favorably in The New York Times. The art critic Roberta Smith described his work in the review as "containing a writhing, billowing energy."

**Tom Sachs** received a BA from Bennington College in Vermont in 1989. In his work Sachs re-envisions modern iconography, masterpieces of engineering, and popular and industrial inventions of the 20th century, in order to focus on themes of American culture and society, which he treats with a heavy dose of humor and sarcasm. Sachs' work has been featured in exhibitions around the globe. In 2016, the Noguchi Museum hosted a solo exhibition of Sachs' work—the first by an artist other than Noguchi himself. In 2015, a retrospective of Sachs' boombox sculptures was presented at The Contemporary Austin, and this year, a version of it traveled to The Brooklyn Museum. In 2013, Sachs' Barbie Slave Ship installation was featured in the 12th Lyon Biennale. The previous year, Sachs' major interactive exhibition, "SPACE PROGRAM: MARS," was co-presented by Creative Time and Park Avenue Armory in New York. Sachs' work was featured at the 2011 Bienal de São Paulo in "In the Name of the Artists—American Contemporary Art from the Astrup Fearnley Collection." Throughout his career, Sachs has had major solo exhibitions at SITE Santa Fe, NM (1999); the Bohlen Foundation, New York (2002); Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2003); the Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, Oslo (2006); the Fondazione Prada, Milan (2006); the Des Moines Art Center, IA, which traveled to the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, MA (2007); the Lever House, New York (2008); and the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2009). Sachs' work can be found in important collection worldwide including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Crystal Bridges, Bentonville, Arkansas; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Solomon R.

Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Fondazione Prada, Milan.

**Lauren Seiden** received her BA in painting and drawing from Bennington College. Her recent exhibitions include Yesterday So Fast, at Denny Gallery in New York City, Action+Object+Exchange at the Drawing Center in New York City, a solo presentation at the Mattatuck Museum, CT, The Last Brucennial curated by Vito Schnabel and the Bruce High Quality Foundation in New York City, SP-Arte in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Radiate at Circle Culture Gallery in Berlin, Germany, The Suspended Line at Josee Bienvenu Gallery in New York City, and ORGANIX: Contemporary Art From The USA, curated by Diego Cortez at the Luciano Benetton Collection in Venice, Italy for the Venice Biennale. Seiden received the AOL and Chuck Close “25 for 25” Grant Award in 2010, in 2014 she was a selected recipient for The Drawing Center's Open Sessions program, and in 2016 was a FID Prize finalist. She has been reviewed and featured in ArtForum, Modern Painters, Art Fag City, New York Magazine, Time Out NY, and Blouin Artinfo. Her work resides in numerous private and public collections.

**Alison Veit** was born in 1989 in Napa, California. She lives and works in Los Angeles. Selected exhibitions included Giant's Child at Beautiful Gallery (Chicago), Say It with a Black Rose at Room East (New York), I Can't Read at Chin's Push (Los Angeles).