

# Utopia is No Place, Utopia is Process opens



Utopia Is No Place, Utopia Is Process, an exhibition that transforms Bennington College's Usdan Gallery into a space for critical feminist pedagogy, opens Tuesday, April 12 and runs through Thursday, May 12. Inspired by Bennington's experimental curricula and its history as a women's college, the project features a selection of video art, a site-specific installation by Ella Dawn McGeough, a D.I.Y. printing press, and an important work by the pioneering artist Lorraine O'Grady. In addition to works of art, resources such as a crowdsourced library, meeting space, and extensive public

program will be available for autonomous and collective investigation. (For a complete list of events, [see below](#).)

The exhibition features works by: Genevieve Belleveau '07; Hannah Black; Adrienne Crossman; Kate Gilmore; Gabriella Hileman; Ann Hirsch; Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden; Nicole Killian; Jen Liu; Kristin Lucas; Ella Dawn McGeough; Divya Mehra; Lorraine O'Grady; Sunita Prasad; Legacy Russell; and Angela Washko ([biographies below](#)).

It is curated by Jacqueline Mabey, who works independently under the name ~~failed projects~~.

In her curatorial statement, Mabey said she intended this to be "a space of inclusivity and mutual respect, of collective, non-competitive inquiry—a safe space, but not one free from discomfort. Discomfort is an important part of learning; transformation usually demands some kind of sacrifice."

The Clearing: or Cortez and La Malinche, Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, N. and Me, 1991/2012 by Lorraine O'Grady is a touchstone for the space. O'Grady, a pioneering artist and scholar, works across installation, performance, and text to reckon with issues of hybridity, diaspora culture, and black female subjectivity. The Clearing is a difficult work: the left panel presents an entwined inter-racial couple, floating in the sky, their clothes abandoned on the ground, across from some playing children; and in the right panel, a chain-mail covered, skeletal figure looms threateningly above a vacant-looking black woman. The work articulates what Grady calls the "both/and", the way in which desire is complicated, irresolvable, always imbricated with the narratives of imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy.

Utopia is No Place, Utopia is Process features a new work by Toronto-based artist Ella Dawn McGeough, specifically created for the exhibition. Memorial for the present is the future of the past consists of 13 printed silk banners, stretching over 40 feet in length. On the banners is printed the image of a cross section of fossilized coral. The piece emerged from the artist's research on the Medusa myth. Through a series of material analogies, Memorial for the present is the future of the past creates a space for reflection on trauma and time. The artist will discuss this work and her larger practice in an artist talk at Usdan Gallery on April 18, 2016.

The exhibition also will include a selection of recent video works by Genevieve Belleveau, Hannah Black, Adrienne Crossman, Kate Gilmore, Gabriella Hileman, Ann Hirsch, Nicole Killian, Jen Liu,

Kristin Lucas, Divya Mehra, Sunita Prasad, Legacy Russell, and Angela Washko that explore themes such as violence, romance, science fiction, and failed utopias. These works illustrate the range of voices and artistic strategies within contemporary feminist perspectives.

The guiding principles of Utopia Is No Place, Utopia Is Process are collaborative learning and horizontal organization. It features a crowd-sourced library from a diverse feminist community. A call was sent out, requesting for people to share what books have been important to their thinking about gender and feminism, particularly those texts that are unexpected or non-canonical. Writer Wendy Vogel, artists Mary Mattingly, Penelope Umbrico, and Sam Vernon, and curator Catherine Morris, amongst many other, suggested a variety of titles for inclusion. The Crossest Library generously offered to source these titles with both books from their collection and newly purchased copies. Thus, even after it ends, part of the project will remain at Bennington College.

Similarly, participants are encouraged to contribute to the pilot press... library. Created by art historian Jennifer Kennedy and artist Liz Linden, pilot press... is a D.I.Y. feminist publishing house that provides a non-hierarchical, unedited, and uncensored look at the self-identified feminist community. Visitors may print and bind as many copies of their work as they like; in exchange for this free publication service, they are required to leave a single bound copy of their publications in the pilot press... library.

### Course offered

As a part of the project, [a pop-up course](#) will be offered, pairing key feminist texts with concrete examples of feminist praxis. Students will learn about the basic principles of feminist organizing from texts by authors including bell hooks, Paul Preciado, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Martine Syms, Kathleen Hanna, and Astra Taylor. The class will then unpack how these ideas shape projects such as Idle No More, #BlackLivesMatter, Deep Lab, chicana punk, cybertwee, Brujas, and Afrofuturism. Over the course of the six classes, class participants will collectively work towards the production of a digital publication, to live at [www.utopiainoplace.net](http://www.utopiainoplace.net). The meeting space is also available for self-organized programs by members of the Bennington community.

### Additional events

#### [Curator's Talk](#)

Monday, April 18, 1:00pm

#### [Opening Reception](#)

Monday, April 18, 6:30pm–8:30pm

#### [Guest Speaker: Lindsay Howard '08](#)

Tuesday, May 3, 6:30pm–7:30pm

Lindsay Howard '08 is a curator exploring how the internet is shaping art and culture. Her work uses experimental curatorial models to reflect what she sees as an essential shift in contemporary culture, specifically a growing interest in collaborative creativity, open source philosophy, and unlimited access to information. She curated the first and second digital art auctions at Phillips Auction House in New York and London, which were called an "art breakthrough" by WIRED Magazine. Previously she founded the exhibition program at 319 Scholes and served as the Curatorial Fellow at Eyebeam, the leading art and technology center in the United States. Her work

has been featured in TIME Magazine, The New York Times, Forbes, Rhizome, TechCrunch, BOMB Magazine, The Verge, and The Wall Street Journal, among others.

#### [Artist Talk: Jen Liu](#)

Saturday, May 7, 6:30pm–8pm

Jen Liu is a New York based visual artist working in video, painting, and performance. Her most recent performance commission for six dancers, *The Red Detachment of Women*, premiered at the Whitney Museum of Art in 2015, and her most recent video, *The Machinist's Lament*, featured in the 2015 Berlinale, 2014 Shanghai Biennial, and The New Museum in 2015, among others. She attended Oberlin College with a double major in Creative Writing and Studio Art (BA) and CalArts for Fine Arts with a minor in Integrated Media (MFA).

#### [Curator's Talk](#)

Tuesday, May 10, 6:30pm–7:30pm

There will be recurring **Curator-in-Residence office hours**, in which Jacqueline Mabey will be available for drop-in conversations on [April 20](#), [April 27](#), [May 4](#), and [May 11](#). All Curator-in-Residence office hours are on Wednesdays between 1 pm and 5 pm in Usdan Gallery.

There will be a series of **Do It Yourself Utopias**, in which the public is invited to self-organize conversations, study groups, creative practices, and more, on [April 23](#), [April 30](#), and [May 7](#). All Do It Yourself Utopias events are on Saturdays from 1 pm to 3 pm in Usdan Gallery.

There also will be a series of **Brown Bag Lunches**—All events are 12:30–1:30 pm in Usdan Gallery.

- [Brown Bag Lunch Series](#)

*Utopia Is No Place, Utopia Is Process* runs Tuesday through Saturday, 1–5 pm, until it closes on May 12. It is free and open to the public.

#### About the artists

**Jacqueline Mabey's** work is shaped both by ten years of post-secondary education in art history and cultural studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, McGill University, and The University of British Columbia, and her multifarious professional experience in commercial galleries and curatorial, public programs, archives, and editorial departments. Her practice is rooted in praxis: she endeavors to create exhibitions, situations, and words that draw out the complexities and complicities of digital materiality.

Recent, forthcoming, and ongoing projects include: *Art+Feminism*, a campaign to improve coverage of women and the arts on Wikipedia; *Utopia is No Place, Utopia Is Process*, a platform for critical feminist pedagogy at Usdan Gallery, Bennington College; *Carnival of Sorts*, an exhibition of work by Jennifer Chan, Adrienne Crossman and Lorna Mills at G Gallery, Toronto; *The Only Song About Here Is About Leaving*; *Or, The Sea Is Lawless*, a multi-modal digital publication on the trope of nature in Canadian art; and *music is my mother*, a lecture on fan culture as a model for feminism. She was included in Foreign Policy magazine's list of 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2014, called a "Badass

Woman" by BuzzFeed, and expressed her feelings on cake and Jeff Koons in Artnews.  
<http://failedprojects.net/>

**Genevieve Belleveau '07** is a relational artist whose work encompasses live performance, interventionist activity, writing, video, healing and new media navigation. Her work has been featured in WIRED, The New Yorker, The Daily Beast, Jezebel, Vice, Bomb Magazine and Rhizome. She has shown at Moma PS1, DAM Gallery, Vox Populi, Transfer Gallery, Eyebeam, VOGT Gallery, Witte de With, and Lilith Performance Studio, among others. She currently resides in Los Angeles, CA, where she facilitates her Sacred Sadism floral healing as a form of therapeutic private performance. She graduated from Bennington College in 2007. <http://gorgeoustaps.guru/>

**Hannah Black** is a writer and artist. Her work in video and installation has been shown at a number of galleries including Arcadia Missa (London), Chateau Shatto (LA), Gallery Diet (Miami) and Lisa Cooley (New York). Her book Dark Pool Party was published by Dominica/Arcadia Missa in February 2016. <https://vimeo.com/hannahblack>

**Adrienne Crossman** is an artist, educator and curator working and living in Toronto. She holds a BFA in Integrated Media and a Minor in Digital and Media Studies from OCAD University. She has completed residencies at Spark Contemporary Art Space in Syracuse, New York and La Baraque in Montréal, Quebec. Her practice aims to create feelings of queerness, by disrupting conceptions of 'normal' and 'natural', bringing to light objects, individuals and spaces that challenge these categories. In attempt to locate and/or create a queer aesthetic, Crossman's work is concerned with the exploration on non-normative and non-binary spaces. Adrienne is currently a Programming Coordinator at Xspace Cultural Centre. <http://www.adriennecrossman.com/>

**Kate Gilmore** was born in Washington D.C. in 1975 and lives and works in New York, NY. Gilmore received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY (2002) and her Bachelor's degree from Bates College, Lewiston, ME (1997). She has been the recipient of several international awards and honors such as the Rauschenberg Residency Award, Rauschenberg Foundation, Captiva, FL (2014), Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome (2007/2008), The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, New York, NY (2009/2010), Art Matters Grant, New York, NY (2012), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Award for Artistic Excellence, New York, NY (2010), the Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance, New York, NY (2006), "In the Public Realm", Public Art Fund, New York, NY (2010), The LMCC Workspace Residency, New York, NY (2005), New York Foundation for The Arts Fellowship, New York, NY (2012 and 2005), and the Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Residency, Brooklyn, NY (2010). She has participated in the 2010 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, The Moscow Biennial, Moscow, Russia (2011), PS1 Greater New York, MoMA/PS1, New York, NY (2005 and 2010) in addition to solo exhibitions at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2014), MoCA Cleveland, Cleveland, OH (2013), Public Art Fund, Bryant Park, New York, NY (2010), Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA (2008), Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, OH (2006). Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California; Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Massachusetts; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana, Indianapolis; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois. Gilmore is an Associate Professor of Art and Design at Purchase College, SUNY, Purchase, NY and Faculty in the MFA Fine Arts Department at School of Visual Arts, New York, NY. <http://www.kategilmore.com/>

**Gabriella Hileman** is a new media artist from Chicago whose work centers around topics of femininity, technology, and contemporary social connection through the curation of virtual identity. <http://www.gabriellahileman.net/>

**Ann Hirsch** is a video and performance artist who examines the influence of technology on popular culture and gender. Her immersive research has included becoming a YouTube camwhore with over two million video views and an appearance as a contestant on Frank the Entertainer...In a Basement Affair on Vh1. She was awarded a Rhizome commission for her two-person play Playground which debuted at the New Museum and was premiered by South London Gallery at Goldsmiths College. Hirsch has been an artist in residence at Yaddo, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Recent solo shows include MIT List Visual Arts Center, Smart Objects, Los Angeles, and the New Museum's online project space First Look. She is represented by American Medium (Brooklyn) and Arcadia Missa (London). <http://therealannhirsch.com/>

**Jen Kennedy** is a Canadian writer, artist, and a Postdoctoral Fellow at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Liz Linden is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York whose conceptually-driven work often employs text and appropriation. Since 2008, Kennedy and Linden have collaborated on a number of projects, all of which create public platforms to explore what the word 'feminism' means in a contemporary context. More information about this project, and their project at large, can be found on their website: [www.contemporaryfeminism.com](http://www.contemporaryfeminism.com). <http://www.contemporaryfeminism.com/>

**Nicole Killian** was born the year the first cd player was sold in Japan. Her work uses graphic design, publishing, photography, video, sculpture and installation in various combinations to investigate how the structures of the internet, mobile messaging, and shared online platforms affect contemporary interaction and shape cultural identity from a queer, feminist perspective. Utilizing default digital tools, understood but twisted formats and pop cultural tropes, the work hopes to point to the capitalist structures, stereotypes and systems we navigate on a daily basis in order to band together and find like-minded individuals. <http://www.nylondip.com/>

**Jen Liu** is a New York based visual artist working in video, painting, and performance. Her most recent performance commission for six dancers, The Red Detachment of Women, premiered at the Whitney Museum of Art in 2015, and her most recent video, The Machinist's Lament, featured in the 2015 Berlinale, 2014 Shanghai Biennial, and The New Museum in 2015, among others. She has also presented work at Royal Academy and ICA in London; Kunsthaus Zurich; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, On Stellar Rays and Issue Project Room in New York; the Aspen Museum of Art; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; MUSAC, Leon; and public commissions on the Manhattan Bridge and Times Square. She has received multiple grants and residencies, including Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany; Sommerakademie, Bern, Switzerland; de ateliers, Amsterdam, NL; the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York; among others. This year she will be a resident artist at Para Site in Hong Kong and LMCC Process Space (for mid-career artists) on Roosevelt Island. Her work is in various private and public collections, including the Goetz collection, Zabłudowicz collection, MUSAC, and the Chadha collection. Liu will have forthcoming exhibitions with the 2016 Berlinale Forum Expanded, Triple Canopy (digital commission); The James Gallery of the CUNY Graduate Center, and Invisible Exports, New York. She attended Oberlin College with a double major in Creative Writing and Studio Art (BA) and CalArts for Fine Arts with a minor in Integrated Media (MFA). <http://jenliu.info/>

**Kristin Lucas** is an interdisciplinary artist living between Austin and New York. Using tropes of science fiction, her videos have playfully explored themes such as the impact of technology on

humanity, the blurring boundary between the body and technology, and the effects of fast-forward society on the environment. She has presented her work nationally and internationally and has been the recipient of numerous awards and residencies. Her videos are distributed by Electronic Arts. Intermix and her expanded body of work is represented by Postmasters Gallery in New York. <http://www.kristinlucas.com/>

**Ella Dawn McGeough** (b. 1982, Vancouver) holds an MFA from the University of Guelph (2013) and a BFA from the University of British Columbia (2007). Nationally, McGeough's work has been exhibited across Canada. Internationally, she has exhibited in Finland, Beijing, and New York. Recent and upcoming shows include solo exhibitions at G Gallery (Toronto), Howard Park Institute (Toronto), and YTB Gallery (Toronto) with group exhibitions at Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), Nicolas Metivier Gallery (Toronto), Olga Korper Gallery (Toronto), The Drake Hotel (Toronto), and PARMER (New York). In addition to making art she organizes events and exhibitions. With artists Colin Miner and Liza Eurich she founded [www.moire.ca](http://www.moire.ca) in 2012, which produces online contemporary arts publications among other activities, including the group exhibition *A kind of graphic unconscious* at Susan Hobbs Gallery. <http://elladawnmcgeough.tumblr.com/>

**Divya Mehra's** research-fuelled practice explores diasporic identities, racialization, otherness, and the construct of diversity. Her work has been included in a number of exhibitions and screenings, notably with Creative Time, MoMA PS1, MTV, and The Queens Museum of Art (New York), MASS MoCA (North Adams), Artspeak (Vancouver), The Images Festival (Toronto), The Beijing 798 Biennale (Beijing), Bielefelder Kunstverein (Bielefeld), and Latitude 28 (Delhi). In 2014, Mehra was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award and received the Manitoba Arts Council Major Arts Grant, a Canada Council for the Arts Project Grant, and the Manitoba Arts Council New York Residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in Brooklyn. Mehra holds an MFA from Columbia University and is represented in Toronto by Georgia Scherman Projects. She currently divides her time between Winnipeg, Delhi, and New York. <http://www.divyamehra.com/>

**Lorraine O'Grady** is an artist and critic whose installations, performances, and texts address issues of diaspora, hybridity, and black female subjectivity. The New York Times in 2006 called her "one of the most interesting American conceptual artists around." And in 2007 her landmark performance, *Mille Bourgeoise Noire*, was made one of the entry points to WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution, the first major museum exhibition of this groundbreaking art movement. Since then, her career has expanded exponentially with inclusions in such significant group shows as the Whitney Biennial (2010), the Paris Triennale (2012), *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s* (MCA Chicago, 2012), *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (CAM Houston, 2012), and *En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* (CAC New Orleans, 2015); and with acquisitions by the Museum of Modern Art, NY, the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, and the Art Institute of Chicago, IL, among many others.

Born in Boston in 1934 to West Indian parents, O'Grady came to art late, not making her first public art work until 1980. After majoring in economics and literature, she had several careers: as an intelligence analyst for the U.S. government, a successful literary and commercial translator, even a rock critic. Ultimately, her broad background contributed to a distanced and critical view of the art world when she entered it and to an unusually eclectic attitude toward art-making. In O'Grady's work, the idea tends to come first, and then a medium is employed to best execute it. Although its intellectual content is rigorous and political, the work is generally marked by unapologetic beauty and elegance. <http://lorraineogrady.com>

**Sunita Prasad** (b. 1984) is a film, video, and performance artist. Her work has been exhibited internationally at venues including the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Homesession in Barcelona, Torino Performance Art in Turin, Momenta Art in New York City, and Vox Populi Gallery in Philadelphia. Sunita has received awards from the Art Matters Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Warner Bros. Production Fund, as well as residencies at T.A.J. & SKE Projects in Bangalore, the Contemporary Artists Center in Troy, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Sunita lives and works in New York City. <http://www.sunitaprasad.net/>

**Legacy Russell** is a writer, artist and cultural producer. Born and raised in New York City's East Village and now based in London, she is the UK Gallery Relations Lead for the online platform Artsy. She has worked at and produced programs for The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Creative Time, the Brooklyn Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. Legacy is one-third of the curatorial production team Limited Time Only, senior editor at London publication Berfrois, and visual art editor at Apogee Journal. In September 2011, she was appointed as art editor of BOMB Magazine's renowned online journal, BOMB Daily, where she has since stayed on as a contributing editor. Outside of BOMB, her work can be found in a variety of publications: The White Review, Rhizome, DIS, The Society Pages, Guernica, Berfrois and beyond. Holding an MRes of Visual Culture with Distinction at Goldsmiths College of University of London, her academic and creative work focuses on gender, performance, digital selfhood, idolatry, and new media ritual. Her first solo gallery exhibition "DIRTY TALK|CLEAN FOOD" featured video work at Field Projects in New York City in Spring 2014. Legacy is also the founding theorist behind Glitch Feminism as a cultural manifesto and movement; #GLITCHFEMINISM aims to use the digital as a means of resisting the hegemony of the corporeal. <http://www.legacyrussell.com/>

**Angela Washko** is an artist, writer and facilitator devoted to creating new forums for discussions of feminism in the spaces most hostile toward it. She is a visiting assistant professor at Carnegie Mellon University. In 2012, Washko founded The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft as an ongoing intervention on communal language formation inside the most popular massively multi-player online role playing game of all time. A recent recipient of The Frank-Ratchye Fund for Art at the Frontier Grant from the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, a Franklin Furnace Performance Fund Grant, a Creative Time Report commission, a Rhizome Internet Art Microgrant, a Danish International Visiting Artist Grant and the Terminal Award, Washko's practice has been highlighted in Art in America, Frieze Magazine, Time Magazine, The Guardian (UK), ArtForum, ARTnews, VICE, Hyperallergic, Rhizome, The New York Times, The Creator's Project, Dazed and Confused Magazine, Dicult, ArtInfo, Bad At Sports and more. Her projects have been presented nationally and internationally at venues including Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki, Finland), Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Moving Image Art Fair (London and NYC), the Rotterdam International Film Festival, Institute for Contemporary Art Boston and Bitforms Gallery in NYC. Washko's work is featured in the recently published book Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the 21st Century from The New Museum and MIT Press. <http://angelawashko.com/home.html>

## About Bennington College

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that distinguished itself early as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education, and to integrate work in the classroom with work in the field. To this day, Bennington stands apart in requiring that every student—every winter term—get a job, complete an internship, or pursue an entrepreneurial experience. Bennington students work

intensively with faculty to forge individual educational paths around their driving questions and interests. The College graduates small classes of tested students, regardless of chosen field, who are notably confident in their capacity to engage and succeed in the world. For additional information, [www.bennington.edu](http://www.bennington.edu).

Bennington College is close to other notable art and culture destinations, including [The Bennington Museum](#) (10 minutes); [The Clark](#) and the [Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art](#) (40 minutes each).

Photo caption: Still from Nicole Killian, Internet Weather Report, 2013, video, 01:05min