



Friday 4/26 FEMeeting: [Buffalo Symposium](#)

Location: UB Student Union, 210 Landmark Room

BIOGRAPHIES AND ABSTRACTS

10:30 – 11:45 Panel: Witchcraft, Porcupines and the Gaia Hypothesis

Presentations by:

- Cecilia Vilca Ocharan, Artist, Member of MyAP Electron Microscopy Laboratory
- Kristina Tome, Board Member, Onöhsagwë:de' Cultural Center
- Claudia Ford, Professor and Chair of Environmental Studies, SUNY Potsdam
- Moderated by Mishuana Goeman, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Indigenous Studies, University at Buffalo

Cecilia Vilca Ocharan, Artist, Member of MyAP Electron Microscopy Laboratory

Cecilia Vilca Ocharan is Peruvian transdisciplinary artist, feminist chola techno-witch, and language activist. She has an M.A. in Digital Arts, UPF, BCN, Spain. She is a founding member of the creative and digital heritage division, MyAP Electron Microscopy Laboratory. From a decolonizing vision, she exercises her epistemological rebellion using technology as a tool and object of analysis. Her main goal and poetics are to encourage reflection through revelation. Her

projects are born from her personal crusades, and therefore, they are micropolitical flesh. ISEA2020 Montreal and ISEA2023 Paris IPC Member. FEMeeting 2023 Taos and TTT2023 Malta Scientific & Artistic Committee member. Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR) Reviewer. Eight Art Residency Programs: Mexico, Bolivia, USA, and Canada. She has exhibited her work, organized exhibitions, and given lectures in Peru, Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina, Spain, Cuba, Chile, Norway, Colombia, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Austria, and the USA. Born, lives and dreams in/from Lima, Peru.

Exorcisms of the Territory

Lecture-Exorcism: invoked texts draw a conversation of times, a history that heals itself. A territory interrogates about the exact moment in which a caminho dos desejos becomes an exorcism. An exploratory journey, a revelation from the epicenter of pain: art has become a healing device. Their deities and algorithms are called.

Kristina Tome

Kristina Tome is a Seneca Artist from the Allegany Territory in Salamanca NY. She works with multiple mediums as well as Native Beadwork and Porcupine quills. She has a BFA from the Department of Art at and is working towards an MFA in Critical Museum Sciences. Her artworks can be viewed at venues including the Onöhsagwë:de' Cultural Center, Native American Museum in NYC and Appalachian Museum in WV. She sits on the Board of the Onöhsagwë:de' Cultural Center and the Native Roots Artist Guild. As a Seneca Artist she believes in teaching young people how to create beadwork and uphold the traditions of the Seneca people.

I will be discussing how as an Indigenous artist I use the Porcupine to make jewelry and how we traditionally used to use the quills of the porcupine to adorn our clothes and make things to wear. I create porcupine earrings and will be learning how to create other porcupine items to wear. I will discuss how I get the quills for the earrings and other processes before I can use them in jewelry as well as the other uses for the porcupine.

Dr. Claudia J. Ford, UB DVS scholar, Professor and Chair of Environmental Studies, SUNY Potsdam

Dr. Claudia J. Ford ([DVS](#) scholar) is professor and chair of Environmental Studies at SUNY, Potsdam, Fellow of the Panel on Planetary Thinking at JLU, Germany, a Fulbright Scholar, and Distinguished Visiting Faculty at the University at Buffalo. Her essays have appeared in Art Review Oxford, Journal of Global Ethics, Orion Magazine, and other publications. She is completing a book, Grandmother Epistemology: Ecology, Culture, Spirit; revealing Black

environmental wisdom for the purpose of addressing planetary healing. Dr. Ford holds degrees in biology, medicine, business administration, fine arts, and environmental humanities. Dr. Ford has held faculty positions at Antioch University, Goddard College, Rhode Island School of Design, University of Virginia, and the University of the Witwatersrand. Her transdisciplinary scholarship reflects her ongoing commitment to racial, womanist, environmental, food, and class justice and she teaches across the subjects of traditional ecological knowledge, spiritual ecology, entheogenic plant medicine, women's reproductive health, and sustainable agriculture.

What Earth is Made of: Planetary Materials, Indigenous Knowledge, and the Gaia Hypothesis

Humans, animate and inanimate beings - we all have in common the DNA of a star. Conceiving of the planet as Gaia, a 'self-regulating complex system' or super-organism, maps onto Indigenous ecological thinking about human/planetary interactions and the cosmology that describes kincentric ecological relationships between humans and the planet. Enlarging our philosophical perspective of the Gaia hypothesis allows us to grapple with the idea that we are all of one origin, made of the same planetary substances, yet exist as a species with supremely different modes of being, worldviews, and paradigms about how to be in sustainable relationship with this unitary planet and our common origins. Art making and storytelling honor the different paradigms of research, knowledge creation, and knowledge sharing that inform our worldviews. The arts pay tribute to the methodologies underlying Indigenous knowledge, making complex scientific and philosophical topics visible to make them more accessible. This presentation will describe the work of my artist residency at The Panel on Planetary Thinking in Giessen, Germany and research as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at UB, focusing on how the arts help us wed the unitary nature of planetary origins with the diverse nature of cultural understandings of those origins.

Mishuana Goeman, Professor and Chair, UB Dept. of Indigenous Studies

Mishuana Goeman is the daughter of an enrolled Hawk Clan member from Tonawanda Band of Seneca. As a daughter of an ironworker, she traveled throughout the east coast with her father and her family members from job site to job site and made connections with others. In her academic life, she continues to travel and build community. She received her BA at Dartmouth College, MA and PHD from Stanford University's Modern Thought and Literature program. She has held positions at UCLA as a professor of Gender Studies and American Indian Studies, and she was a Special Advisor to the Chancellor on Native American and Indigenous Affairs. More recently, she moved to the University at Buffalo to help found their Indigenous Studies Department and serve as chair. She has written numerous peer-reviewed articles, contributed to edited collections, and coedited the Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her first monograph *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (2013) traces settler colonialism as an enduring form of gendered spatial violence, demonstrating how it persists in

the contemporary context of neoliberal globalization through literary texts from the 20th century Native women writers. Her forthcoming book, *Settler Aesthetics and the Spectacle of Ordinary Moments: Terrence Malick's the New World* (2023), examines the continuity of imperialist exceptionalism and settler-colonial aesthetics. In addition, Goeman is a Co-PI on a community based digital project grant, *Mapping Indigenous L.A.*, which is a digital humanities and social science project launched in 2015 that maps the stories of multiple communities in Indigenous LA. She has also helped develop *Carrying Our Ancestors Home* (2019), which looks to digital media in order to develop better practices in working with tribal communities as well as improve the flow of information back and forth, particularly on repatriation and NAGPRA issues.

PANEL -- 1:00-2:45 Love, Embodiment and DNA

Presentations by:

- Marta de Menezes (Marta de Menezes, Artist, Director, Cultivamos Cultura, Coalesce Resident) and Cosima Herter (Screenwriter/Storyteller, Coalesce Resident)
- Marisa Manheim, Assistant Professor, UB Dept. of Environment and Sustainability
- Emma Akmakdjian, Artist, Program Manager at Supercollider Art (Coalesce Resident)
- Moderated by Crystal Z. Campbell, Visiting Associate Professor of Art & Media Study, University at Buffalo.

Emma Akmakdjian, Artist, Program Manager at Supercollider Art, (Coalesce Resident)

Emma Akmakdjian is an interdisciplinary artist who translates climate data and system processes into interactive installations to dissolve barriers between nature and culture. Her work focuses on mariculture and marine ecologies, taking inspiration from her experience as an AAUS scientific scuba diver. Akmakdjian received her MFA from UCLA in Design | Media Arts and has a certificate in Leaders of Sustainability. She pursued her Bachelor of Arts from California State University Channel Islands and studied at L'Accademia di Belle Arti, Firenze, Italy.

<https://www.emmaakmakdjian.com>

Borderline between Psychosis & Creativity: Three Generations of Artistic

InheritanceAkmakdjian thinks about ancestral knowledge sharing as an integrated system that does not differentiate between biology and culture, or the mind and body. Comparing the genetic sequence for Neuregulin 1 between Akmakdjian, her mom, and maternal grandmother.

Neuregulin 1 is a gene linked to a complicated mental disease, schizophrenia, that Akmakdjian's maternal grandmother was diagnosed with over a decade ago. Exploring the connection between mental disease and creativity, Akmakdjian questions if there is a threshold between psychosis and creativity? How can this gene encourage or inhibit our ability to see the world? Just like the

brain is an infrastructure for thoughts, Akmakdjian imagines a loom can be an infrastructure to spin genetic sequences through labor.

Marta de Menezes, Artist, Director, Cultivamos Cultura, Coalesce Resident

Marta de Menezes has been exploring the possibilities modern biology offers to artists. Developing the use of biology and biotechnology as a field of research to develop and learn new techniques to operate and manipulate new art media, conducting her practice in research laboratories that uses as her art studio. As a consequence, Menezes' art research activities have been directly linked to research on the intersection of art and science and, specifically, responding to the rising awareness of society about the developments in science and technology. <http://martademenezes.com/>

Cosima Herter, Screenwriter/Storyteller, Coalesce Resident

Cosima does not identify as an artist, per se. She is a storyteller who creates intangible tales that can be brought to form through staged productions. Marta is a bio-artist: using living matter as her medium, she creates material objects that can be held, smelled, touched, felt and viscerally experienced as a physical substance.

Together, we are a team collaborating and combining our stories to construct something that is fully beyond the sum of its parts. *I Can't Live Without You* is birthed from the dialogue between artist, storyteller, ancient species, and modern technology. This is a relationship. All art is a relationship. In our case, not only between storyteller and artist, but with the organism that literally gives it life.

I Can't Live Without You

I Can't Live Without You is a large-scale, living sculpture installation born inside of a story from a science fiction thriller Herter wrote in 2019. From a distance, the installation appears to be a life size sculpture of a naked, adult female form in a glass aquarium. She is hollow, made of plastic, nearly transparent, and seems eerily delicate. She stands with her arms raised above her head with her fingers spread as though touching a spectacle in front of her lifted eyes that we cannot see. Her body is poised in mid-strain as she reaches upwards. As the viewer moves closer, it's apparent that she is not alone. Her partner is revealed on the texture of her surface: *Pestalotiopsis microspora* (*P. microspora*). Over the next several weeks, the fungus will, literally, eat the sculpture. Colonizing her body, consuming her being, and ultimately dying of starvation once she is completely gone.

Marisa Manheim, Assistant Professor, UB Department of Environment and Sustainability

Marisa Manheim's research investigates how embodied experiences can be mobilized to build consensus and develop creative approaches to solving society's sustainability challenges. This research lies at the intersection of design, public participation in science and technology, and sustainability transitions management. Marisa has a background in user experience design and spent eight years prior to her Ph.D. as policy and programming director for an urban agriculture nonprofit in Pittsburgh, PA. Her doctoral research, which investigated decision-making about recycled wastewater as a drinking water supply in Arizona, received a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, a Babbitt Center Dissertation Fellowship and a WateReuse Arizona Scholarship.

Experiencing water differently, together

Disconnects between policymakers' and community residents' viewpoints about sustainability transitions can be a critical barrier to implementation. Lack of public support for government policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change can limit their scope and effectiveness. This research asks how immersive artistic and material experiences can help bridge the gap between everyday and technocratic knowledge and facilitate more inclusive ways to imagine and deliberate sustainable futures. Arizona is the site for an ongoing exploration of these possibilities in relation to tap water and the opportunity to incorporate treated wastewater into the region's drinking water supply. Three interventions have been iteratively co-designed with policymakers and tap water skeptical consumers. Festival exhibits *Experiencing Waters* and *The Future Taste of Water* employed sensory probes to surface attendees' tacit knowledge and expectations about drinking water flavors. A subsequent investigation used popsicles made from recycled water to transfer hopes and concerns from participants to policymakers. The next opportunity will apply virtual/augmented reality to expand the reach of these interventions. This presentation reflects on what has been learned about how to design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions that seek to build a shared awareness of diverse realities and open space for considering alternative futures.

Crystal Z Campbell, Visiting Associate Professor, UB Dept. of Art

Crystal Z Campbell (they/them/theirs) is a multidisciplinary artist, experimental filmmaker, and writer of Black, Filipino, and Chinese descents. Campbell finds complexity in public secrets — fragments of information known by many but undertold or unspoken. Their archive-driven work in film/video, performance, installation, sound, painting, and text, has been exhibited at Drawing Center, Nest, ICA-Philadelphia, Studio Museum of Harlem, SculptureCenter, and SFMOMA, amongst others. Honors and awards include the Pollock-Krasner Award, MAP Fund, MacDowell, Skowhegan, Rijksakademie, Whitney ISP, Franklin Furnace, Tulsa Artist Fellowship, and Flaherty Film Seminar. Campbell's writing has been featured in *World Literature Today*, *Monday Journal*, *GARAGE*, and *Hyperallergic*. Campbell is a Harvard

Radcliffe Film Study Center & David & Roberta Logie Fellow (2020-2021) and founder of the virtual programming platform archiveacts.com. Campbell was recently named a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow in Fine Arts.

3:00 - 4:45 PANEL -- Matter, Aesthetics, and the Microbiome

Presentations by:

- Daniela Brill Estrada, Artist and Researcher, (Coalesce Resident)
- Jennifer Surtees, Professor, Co-Director of the Genome, Environment and Microbiome Community of Excellence, University at Buffalo
- Kathy High, Artist, Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Roberta Buiani, Artist, Scholar, Co-founder ArtSci Salon
- Moderated by Christina Corfield, UB Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Media Study, University at Buffalo

BIOGRAPHIES AND ABSTRACTS

Daniela Brill Estrada, Artist and Researcher, Coalesce Resident

Daniela Brill Estrada is an artist from Bogotá living and working in Vienna. Daniela's creative process is nourished by her interest in complexity sciences, aesthetics and non-hierarchical structures of knowledge, and is based on the idea of indisciplinarity, constructed with the Suratómica Network, of which she is co-organizer. In collaboration with particle physicists, researchers of the origin of life and astrobiologists, Daniela's work is focused on de-hierarchizing matter and eliminating binary western taxonomies and categories, particularly that of life-non-life. In her work, Daniela uses matter that mutates, changes and interacts to make visible the information processes of different bodies.

Living Alive Life Like

brill estrada's project explores matter at the intersection of geochemistry and biochemistry and artistically explores its structures and relations, focusing on materials used in the biological laboratories to look into the behavior, cycles, and complex systems of life. "Turning the figures of life and matter around and around, worrying them until they start to seem strange" as described in Jane Bennett's book, giving it an artistic as well as political and philosophical venture. This process creates an opening for a material anarchy, as brill estrada describes, the project questions care and binaries – not necessarily alive or part of the world, and gives a space for elements such as minerals, polymers, and others to be part of the complex mesh of existences that enable life to exist on this planet.

Jennifer A. Surtees

Professor of Biochemistry, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Co-Director of the Genome, Environment and Microbiome Community of Excellence
Executive Committee Member of the Center for Information Integrity
University at Buffalo

Jennifer A. Surtees is an expert on genome stability and genetic diversity. She can speak to the media about a variety of topics tied to genetics, the human genome and DNA replication, repair and recombination. Surtees believes that scientists have a responsibility to communicate clearly with the public as discoveries push the boundaries of knowledge and technology in biology. She feels strongly that an informed public is better able to support science and benefit from it. She has served as co-director of the Genome, Environment and Microbiome Community of Excellence at UB, which advances understanding of the genome and microbiome and their interaction with the environment through research, education, community programs and art. Surtees' lab focuses on the general problem of maintaining genome stability, which refers to an organism or cell's ability to accurately transmit genetic material to a new generation. Topics of interest include how genetic mutations threaten that stability and sometimes lead to cancer and neurodegenerative diseases.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Surtees has worked with UB colleagues and the Erie County Public Health Laboratory to conduct genomic sequencing of virus samples in Western New York. These efforts have aided the region's COVID-19 response, identifying the arrival of new variants and helping the community understand how SARS-CoV2 infections are changing locally as the virus evolves.

Bio-art, pandemics and public trust

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, though devastating, spurred the development of novel methods for virus detection, including genomic sequencing of patient and wastewater viral samples. These methods provided data for infection models, public health engagement, and vaccination efforts. Regional infrastructure was a determinant of the success and speed of these efforts, and this information can be used to optimize strategies going forward. Pandemic threats will not end with SARS-CoV-2 and we must learn the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic. Preventing future pandemics requires problem-solving and preparation on three main fronts: 1) detecting the threat early, 2) communicating the threat to both public health officials and the broader community in an effective, productive manner, and 3) mitigating the threat and preventing spread. Our PREventing PAndemics in our REgion (PREPARE) team is addressing each of these problems through interdisciplinary research and intentional community engagement. These efforts involve monitoring microbial and human ecosystems and inclusive communication to diverse communities to create behavioral change and to build trust. Our vision is a community-rooted ecosystem of partners implementing ongoing problem-solving and reflection. We envision an early warning system for outbreaks that integrates environmental and human data coupled with information sharing with public health officials and community members. Throughout, we must engage intentionally, consistently, and longitudinally with the diverse communities in our region to promote science literacy and communication, to build true partnerships founded on trust and to prepare more receptive audiences for our science- and data-driven approach to pandemic detection and prevention. I will focus on the key role that Bio-art plays in communicating science to a broad audience, in provoking critical collaborations and conversations underlying this interdisciplinary work and in imagining scenarios and solutions to these key problems.

Kathy High, Artist, Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Kathy High is an interdisciplinary artist working with technology, art and biology. She collaborates with scientists and artists, and considers living systems, empathy, animal sentience, and the social, political and ethical dilemmas of biotechnology and surrounding industries. She has received awards including the Guggenheim Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and National Endowment for Arts. Her art works have been shown at documenta 13 (Germany), Guggenheim Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Lincoln Center and Exit Art (NYC), UCLA (Los Angeles), Science Gallery, (Dublin), NGBK, (Berlin), Festival Transito_MX (Mexico), MASS MoCA (North Adams), Para-site Gallery (Hong Kong), and Esther Klein Gallery, Science Center (Philadelphia). She has had residencies with SymbioticA (2009-10), Finnish Society of Bioart (2013), Coalesce (2016-17), Djerassi Scientific Delirium Madness (2019), DePaolo Lab/ Center for Microbiome Sciences & Therapeutics, UW, Seattle (ongoing). High is Professor in Arts, and has a lab at the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy. She is project coordinator for the urban environmental center, NATURE Lab, with the community media organization The Sanctuary for Independent Media, and is also on the board of directors. High is also on the GENSPACE board of directors (Brooklyn) and [REFRESH](#) advisory board.

Our Great Microbiome Crash

Looking at her past artworks as a jumping off point, Kathy High will present some current projects that take a somewhat dark turn. She considers the condition of dysbiosis in our gut microbiome, and also questions why dysbiosis is becoming a chronic and widespread condition. In response, High's Lazarus: Becoming Vulture is a project looking at the advantages of the vulture's lifestyle and limited gut microbiome. Alternatively, what are the effects that persistent stress and trauma produce on our bodies, on our microbiomes? A collaboration commenced with the Arumugam laboratory and their SHIME – Simulator of the Human Intestinal Microbial Ecosystem, University of Copenhagen, will conduct tests on the gut microbiome for the project Super Heroes, Super Absences. These new models will open-up new ways for people to consider their diseases, and, in turn, develop communities of care.

Roberta Buiani, Artist, Scholar, Co-founder ArtSci Salon

Roberta Buiani is an assistant professor in Media and Cultural Studies and coordinator of NewONE, an interdisciplinary first year experience program at New College, the University of Toronto. She is the co-founder and artistic director of the ArtSci Salon at the [Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences](#) (Toronto) and Scholar in Residence at Sensorium, Centre for Digital Arts and Technology (York University). Her recent research focuses on life forms exceeding the categories defined by traditional methods of classification.

Ode to the viral and all things we don't (want to) see

In the past 4 + years the world has acquired quite an intimate relation with a certain Viral occurrence. Science and technology have attempted –with some degree of success and some challenges– to understand it and to tame its elusive nature and behavior. Art-based and cross-disciplinary collaborations have further revealed its complex making and intense entanglement with the world at large. But what has become increasingly clear and perhaps more fascinating, is that said virus, along with the other trillions of viruses existing inhabit the soil, float in the ocean, and populate our guts and even our DNA. We are more connected with them than we think. This extraordinary mobility and insidiousness is not limited to the biological realm, but extends across disciplines and intersect with information and all aspects of culture. Maybe that's why Viruses both fascinate and scare us. How do we embrace such complexity and richness? How do we ease our apprehension towards viral phenomena and learn to love the “viral”?

Christina Corfield, Visiting Assistant Professor, Dept. of Media Study, University at Buffalo

Christina Corfield is an artist and media scholar whose work pushes against the historical amnesia that often accompanies the fetishizing of new technologies. The projects she researches both present and complicate histories of media and technology to create space for critical thought about the technologies we rely on every day, and the systems that make those technologies

necessary or attractive. Christina is especially interested in how new technologies are explained and represented in popular culture to make them understandable and desirable to the public through dramatization and iconography. Being critical and aware of this process is important because the stories and images associated with technologies ultimately construct the meaning and perceived value of those technologies for individuals and for society. Her work has shown at media festivals, in galleries, universities, and at international conferences. She has had a solo show at Johansson Projects in Oakland, CA and has been part of group shows at the Bluecoat, Liverpool UK, MOCA North Miami, the Exploratorium in San Francisco and Telematic Gallery also in San Francisco, among others. She has also taken part in several residencies, including at the Kala Institute, Berkeley, CA, and Western New York Book Arts Center in Buffalo. Her writing has been published online and in scholarly journals including articles about her creative practice and research in *Media Fields Journal*, the *Journal of Early Visual Media* and book chapters on peep boxes in *Provenance and Early Cinema* published by University of Indiana Press, and experimental historiography in the soon to be published *The Aestheticization of History and the Butterfly Effect*, released by Vernon Press.