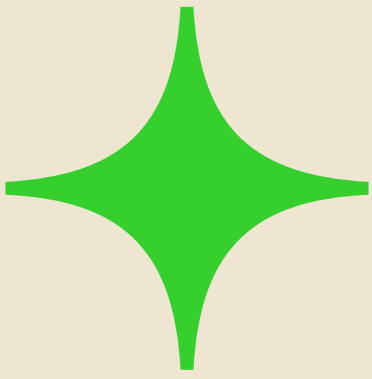




TO BOUGH AND TO BEND

BRIDGE PROJECTS

- ROBERT ADAMS
- MIYA ANDO
- CHARLES E. BURCHFIELD
- PAMELA BURGESS
- DANIEL CHEEK
- ZOE CROSER
- GIL DELINDRO
- KIERAN DODDS
- CHRIS GAROFALO
- KEN GONZALES-DAY
- TODD GRAY
- TIM HAWKINSON
- LEONOR JURADO
- KAZUO KADONAGA
- CORITA KENT
- SIOBHAN MCDONALD
- RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD
- JARRETT MELLEBRUCH
- HAROLD MENDEZ
- BILLY JOE MILLER
- AHRAM PARK
- KATE PARSONS
- KATIE PATERSON
- HEATHER RASMUSSEN
- LUCAS REINER
- BEN SANDERS
- TAL SHOCHAT
- BEN VANCE
- ELLEN WAGENER
- PATTY WICKMAN
- AMIR ZAKI



TO BOUGH  
AND TO BEND  
SPRING 2020  
BRIDGE PROJECTS  
LOS ANGELES

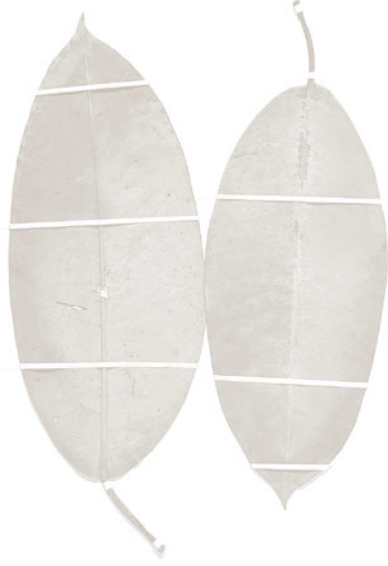
IF YOU COULD  
BE A TREE...



## Miya Ando

b. 1978; lives in New York

Notes——I would be one of the *rustic* that I grew up with in the Santa Cruz Mountains; the redwoods are the largest living organisms on Earth and some of the oldest. I've seen them sway in the wind and remain standing during powerful rainstorms. I respect their resilience and strength. They carry wisdom quietly and elegantly. I would like to be this way.



## Ahram Park

b. 1986; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——There's a *rustic* that I've been visiting and sourcing leaves from all winter; it's one of the oldest and largest trees in Lincoln Park. The tree has been generously shedding leaves, which I then shape and photograph.



## Leonor Jurado

b. 1979; lives in Los Angeles and Quito, Ecuador

Notes——I would be a *Polylepis*! I just love that tree, and they get quite big in Ecuador where I live. The *Polylepis* is also known as the paper tree (and paper is my obsession!). Its branches are multi-layered sheets of fibers that help the tree keep warm; each layer is like a text, and each layer is its own universe with its unique marks and nuances. I find it highly poetic, plus its branches possess intense siennas and red colors—it's just beautiful! It produces thick leaves and scentless flowers rich in pollen that travels by wind. Its shape is kind of gnarly, convoluted, and somewhat rough. It's a little hermit with tons of character, like an old, wise person. They grow slowly, so if you encounter one, with no doubt, it has been around for a long time.



## Kazuo Kadonaga

b. 1946; lives in Ishikawa, Japan

Notes——I learned patience from the journey of the *Shizu*. In Japan, this beech tree was considered useless for a long while. During the rapid industrial growth years after the war, beech forests were destroyed and replaced with fast-growing conifers. It took a long time for people to recognize that the buna forest is of great value for water conservation and the ecosystem.



## Ellen Wagener

b. 1962; lives in Phoenix, AZ

Notes——If trees had a religion, the *bur oak* would be the shaman. Mysterious, marvelous, and magical, twisted bur oaks gather in clusters and live in communities. Often, elder bur oak is mistaken for the “Tree of Life.” Midwest prairie fires are not uncommon, but the bur oak is the only tree that can withstand a prairie fire. I’ve always personally identified with the tenacious resilience of this majestic tree.



## Pamela Burgess

b. 1947; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I immediately thought of a *fallow tree* or hollow log on the ground in a forest—a place where insects live and small animals hide.



## Anir Zaki

b. 1974; lives in Huntington Beach, CA

Notes——I would love to be a *Monterey cypress* tree overlooking the ocean along the North Coast of California. They have the best view and they weather all storms. They are not too colorful, but they make up for it in unusual and dramatic forms. They probably make wonderful homes for insects, birds, squirrels, and raccoons. If I were a Monterey cypress, I'd welcome all the creatures except raccoons. The ones I've met have been assholes.



## Ken Gonzales-Day

b. 1964; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——My favorite tree is the *Quercus agrifolia*, or valley oak, which is endemic to California. I spent many hours in the dappled shade of their branches as a young boy because my father worked in the East Bay Regional Parks near our home. Years later, I returned to these same locations, but this time as an artist and researcher looking to identify sites where citizens had lynched Black, Chinese, Latinx, Native American, and other people from Australia, Europe, and the United States. Standing under the oaks' canopied shade, I sense this vanishing history—and yet my eyes also trace the curving lines of a twisted branch, and I am filled with the awe of a child, renewed by their strength to endure.



## Lucas Reiner

b. 1960; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I'm not sure if the *ficus tree* would be my first choice, but it somehow feels the most relevant. In my native Southern California, many of these trees were planted around the time I was born and reached maturity by the time I began painting trees in 2001. More iconic than the towering palms, ficus trees are like frontline soldiers planted along some of the dirtiest and busiest boulevards in Los Angeles. Their branches interfere with motorists' sightlines, obscure shop and street signs, and disrupt power lines. At the same time, they absorb pollution, provide shade and oxygen, and respond to the most radical trimmings by growing stronger. The power of their trunks and roots, shackled in cement, reminds me of Kafka's axe, breaking the concrete of our sidewalks and, if we are lucky, the frozen sea within us.



## Chris Garofalo

b. 1958; lives in Chicago

Notes——How can I choose just one? I had my first kiss with my back against an oak tree in my childhood front yard. We used a *ycarunore* as home base for our kickball games. We passed through a forest of "fuzzy" *white pines* to emerge magically into our grandma's backyard. A friend taped paper flowers onto my brother's *crabapple* tree when it didn't bloom in time for his birthday. We spent hours peeling the bark off our neighbor's *paper birch* tree and hid under the draping branches of their *weping willow*. A small bear visited my husband and I in a grove of *quaking aspens* one New Mexico summer. The first time I laid eyes on a *Joshua tree* I was overwhelmed with déjà vu. I've pressed a hundred yellow *ginkgo* leaves into books. A *Cinnex obi* swallowed up the chain link fence separating our yard from our neighbor's, and a ring of mushrooms arrive every year where my mother and brother—both gone now—helped me plant a green oak tree, reminding me of the eternal cycle of life and death, regeneration from decomposition, becoming from undoing.



## Tim Hawkinson

b. 1960; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——The *incense cedar* trees that grow in Altadena near my home and studio are remarkable for their unusual forms. Out of a basic and rigid trunk grow loopy, wiggly branches, most unexpectedly, like Shiva swatting at flies.



## Heather Rasmussen

b. 1982; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I have a lot of favorite trees, but I've never thought about actually being a tree. Do I want to be a flowering tree? What about a tree that produces fruit or nuts to sustain other life? As a mother who used my body to create food for my son, I can relate to the latter. My favorite trees to look at are silk floss, jacaranda, camellia, and coral. My favorite fruiting trees are fig, lemon, avocado, plum, black walnut, and almond. I think I would choose to be a *cevit* tree as it is commonly found in sandy soil and grows well near the coastal regions of California. Its branches are irregular and twisted, dancing around one another and creating interesting shapes. Its large leaves disappear before the buds sprout, creating huge red flowers in the spring.



## Ben Sanders

b. 1989; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I would like to be an *olive* tree. They are tough, old, and wise. Their fruit is the one of the most versatile and useful. Even the very oldest trees still bear fruit. If I were an olive tree, I could watch whole civilizations come and go.



## Patty Wickman

b. 1959; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I first identified with the *Yucca* on family drives to Santa Ynez—the jagged horizontal spread of their ancient canopies on drought-stressed fields of dry, ochre-colored grass, and their root fungi extending beyond the tree to collect nutrients and water for themselves and other plants in their communal grid.



**Kate Parsons**  
b. 1981; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I would be the *crucifera* tree from my grandmother's backyard. It was the first tree I ever climbed and the first tree I ever fell out of. I spent my childhood under that tree and was devastated when I found out it died a few years ago. The house is still in the family, and the stump is still there. I can't seem to let anyone remove it.

BRIDGE PROJECTS

TO BOUGH AND  
TO BEND

# CONTENTS

1 ———	74 ———
If You Could	To Endure
Be a Tree+++	Vicki Phung Smith
Artists Respond	
20 ———	88 ———
Director’s Foreword	To Forget
Cara Megan Lewis	Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera
22 ———	100 ———
Welcome	Image Credits
Roberta Ahmanson	
30 ———	103 ———
To Look	Acknowledgments
Michael Wright	
42 ———	105 ———
To Graft	If You Could
Cara Megan Lewis	Be a Tree+++
	Artists Respond, cont’d
58 ———	36–41, 50–57,
To Somersault	66–73, 82–87,
Linnéa Gabriella	96–99 ———
Spransy Neuss	Artists’ Plates

# DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

When true simplicity is gain'd,  
To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
Till by turning, turning we come round right.

— Joseph Brackett, from "Simple Gifts," 1848

A seed of a tree is delivered on the wind or the wing of a bird; the seed of an exhibition can start with a few simple words. *To Bough and To Bend*—the title of which comes from a Shaker dance song—was sown through a series of conversations with artists and community organizers, drawing our attention to the abiding significance of our sylvan neighbors. The exhibition was organized by a team of five curators—each represented by an essay in this book—with poetry and song as our guides. Bookending the curators' reflections, you will find the artists' own words. On March 11, 2020, at a potluck dinner to mark the opening day of the exhibition, we asked each person at the table: "If you could be a tree, what tree would you be and why?" The simple question evoked unexpectedly revealing answers, so we extended the inquiry to all of the artists in the exhibition and recorded their responses in this book. Enjoy what has grown into a lush canopy of rich and nourishing content.

— Cara Megan Lewis  
Co-director, Bridge Projects

# WELCOME

When I was in high school, I saw a tree get struck by lightning. I was sitting in my favorite spot in our house: a chair in front of a huge window that looked out on an ancient oak tree. It was a hot and muggy Iowa summer day. The sky was dark. The wind and rain flashed through the trees, pounding at the window. Enthralled, I watched the rain stagger across the street in sheets. Then, Boom! Flash! Shudder! Lightning struck that sturdy oak tree. Its stump lay shattered on the ground, with shards of wood sticking up toward the sky where its branches had once soared above me. I mourned that tree. So did my parents. A friend had died.

*To Bough and To Bend*, Bridge Projects' second show, collects and displays memories and experiences of trees, similar to and different from mine. We know we need trees to put oxygen in the air. We worry over forests destroyed—the Amazon, Scotland, Ethiopia. We drink coffee from paper cups. We sit on furniture

made from wood. We love its look and touch and feel. And, sometimes we burn logs in fires at the beach or the campground. Trees are an integral part of our lives.

Different religions see trees in different ways. Christians and Jews share the stories of the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Book of Genesis. For Christians, the cross on which Jesus Christ died is a tree. For Buddhists, the Bodhi Tree provided the shade where the Buddha reached enlightenment. In Norse mythology, Yggdrasil connects the Nine Worlds, the universe held together by a living tree. For Basques, the symbol of their culture and freedom is Gernikako Arbola, an oak tree that grows in their capital city Guernica.

Perhaps my favorite visual tree story is Piero della Francesca's fresco series of the *Legend of the True Cross*, in which the wood from the Garden of Eden becomes the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. Piero completed the work between 1452 and 1466 in the Bacci Chapel of the Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo, Italy. His source was *The Golden Legend* written by the Dominican friar, and later, Bishop of Genoa, Jacobus da Varagine around 1260. The book recounts the stories of the lives of saints, with several versions of the story of the True Cross woven among them.

The theme was potent in Italy at the time because after the Ottomans captured the Byzantine capital Constantinople in 1453, they began raiding the Italian

coast, torching towns and often killing the inhabitants. Their leader Mehmet II aimed to capture the entire Italian peninsula. For the Italians, the saga of the True Cross was a symbol of hope. If it could survive, they could too.

In Piero's version, Seth, the son of Adam and Eve, took a branch (or a seed) from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the tree from which the first pair had eaten the forbidden fruit, and planted it on the grave of Adam; from there, the tree and its descendants flourished. The great King Solomon used its wood to build a bridge that so impressed the Queen of Sheba that she was inspired to predict the coming of Christ to make a new covenant with all people, not only the Jews. Aghast, Solomon tore down the bridge and buried the wood. Centuries later, St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, went to Jerusalem to find the site of the crucifixion and the True Cross, believed to be made from the wood of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. She found three crosses, among them the True Cross which revealed itself when a woman was healed by its touch. Helena's cross was later covered in silver and placed in Constantine's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Egeria, a fourth century pilgrim, writes of seeing it and seeing people kiss and touch it. In the early seventh century, Emperor Heraclius recaptured it and carried it in triumph to Constantinople. That recovery was the sign of hope for fifteenth-century Italians.

Piero's frescoes—from the death of Adam to Helena finding the True Cross—shimmer, the air alive. It's as though the figures are about to move, to step, perhaps, off of the chapel wall. At the center of their attention is the tree that became the True Cross.

For the many artists in *To Bough and To Bend*, trees tell their own stories, whether it be Kieran Dodds's photographs of threatened Ethiopian church forests, Tim Hawkinson's St. Sebastian made from Christmas trees, palm branches, seeds, and fruit skins, or Ellen Wagener's drawing of the massive D.H. Lawrence tree. The exhibition both reveals and invites. It reveals the responses of the artists as something integral to all our lives and to the faith of many, and it invites each of us to ponder the meaning of these magnificent plants that make our life on this planet not only possible but beautiful.

—Roberta Green Ahmanson  
Chair, Bridge Projects



# TO LOOK

Did I really see palm fronds before walking around Zoe Crosher’s bronze sculptures of them? I’ve certainly stepped over these fallen branches, obstacles along my harried path. No, I hadn’t noticed the pleasing symmetry where leaves fold precisely into the stem. I hadn’t noticed the loping arc of the frond’s neck or the frayed threads of its base where it once met the palm’s crown.

“Look hard, look long, look soft,” Corita Kent once wrote. “Looking is the beginning of seeing.”<sup>1</sup> I wasn’t looking until the artist shared her vision with me. Now, on my walks during a stay-at-home order in Los Angeles, I meet these strange limbs as you might contemplate a reclining nude.

Daniel Cheek’s black and white photograph *Oklahoma* has a similar, if not more sobering, effect. The exposed roots of a felled tree jut and splay into a suffocating landscape. As your eyes adjust to the grayscale, you can barely make out a car drifting along a road that stretches across the groundline. With two distant telephone poles framing the tree trunk, the whole scene feels elegiac, an image less about the

Michael Wright is Director of Communications of Bridge Projects, and he writes and speaks regularly on art, poetry, and spirituality.

MICHAEL WRIGHT

31

trunk itself and more about the human industry that left it there. It's easy to imagine the driver, moving aimless through a thick fog, eyes ahead. This isn't so much a place but the absence of it, the dislocating results of inattention. So how do we practice a more attentive vision? How can we remember to look?

Maybe we can start by training our eyes to look beyond the constricting circumference of our own lifetimes. We can learn to lengthen our imaginations. Certainly, this is a guiding focus for Katie Paterson's *Future Library*, an anthology that accumulates one entry a year until it will finally be read in 2114, published on paper harvested from trees recently planted in an Oslo forest. Paterson's project jolts our egocentric view of time into a geological, even generational, timescale. To view the artwork is to imagine it continuing beyond our own lives. Or as the Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh suggests, the artwork helps us see our inter-being: "Everything is here in this sheet of paper. You cannot point out one thing that is not here—time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper.... To be is to inter-be."<sup>2</sup>

Jarrett Mellenbruch takes a similar approach with *Redwood Preserve*, trading books for blockchain technology to consider how digital platforms might help raise funds to purchase and protect California wilderness. Part conservation effort, part

social practice art, viewers gather around recovered redwood tables to imagine—and touch—possible futures. "Art provides a mechanism to effect collective understanding," Mellenbruch writes and, like *Future Library*, these artworks are centrifugal: they *re-locate* viewers into cycles of restoration spiralling out beyond a single lifespan.<sup>3</sup>

But if that geological scale seems too daunting, Siobhan McDonald shows that this process can be centripetal, too. The imagination can focus inward, like prayer. In her video meditation *Breathe*, an X-rayed rib cage and time-lapsed houseplant overlap as a single breathing body. The music by David Stalling—composed with plants and human breath—reinforces a sense of intimacy with the more-than-human world. "*O nobilissima viriditas!*" (O noble greening power), Hildegard von Bingen sang as she meditated on the vitalizing energies of God that animate all living things. Here, life folds into life, breath into breath.

So where are we when this prayerful posture and social imagination meet? What does that landscape look like? Maybe it looks like the centuries-long preservation of endangered forests by Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Churches, photographed by Kieran Dodds. Known worldwide as "church forests," Dodds's aerial images *Bitsawit Mariam* and *Kuskwam Mariam* depict wooden, sacred architecture embedded in the very landscapes used for their construction.

The worshipping community radiates into the landscape and the forest enlivens their prayer, weaving both into a single whole. The Russian art historian Alexei Lidov calls this porous cycle “hierotopia,” a sacralizing landscape that, for Ethiopian Christians, evokes a future hope: a new Eden where all relationships—human and divine—will be restored.

Dislocation isn’t inevitable, these artists seem to say; it’s merely the results of our unseeing, of our constricted imaginations. What will we discover if we take their lead and practice a more vital and grounding vision?

Palm Sunday, Los Angeles 2020

#### NOTES

1. Corita Kent and Jan Steward, *Learning by Heart: Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit* (New York: Allworth, 2008), 33.

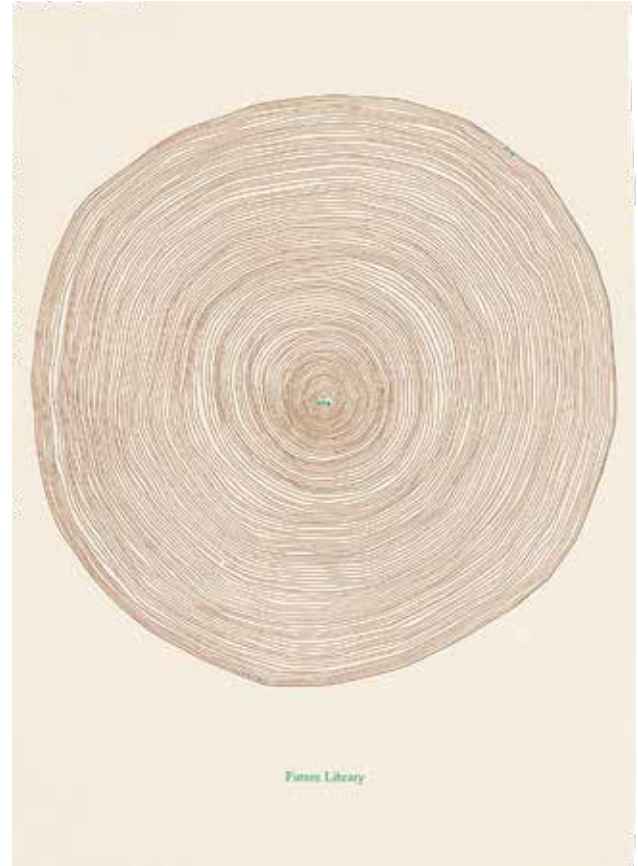
2. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 95–96.

3. Jarret Mellenbruch, *Use-Value Aesthetics* (self-pub., 2014), 13.



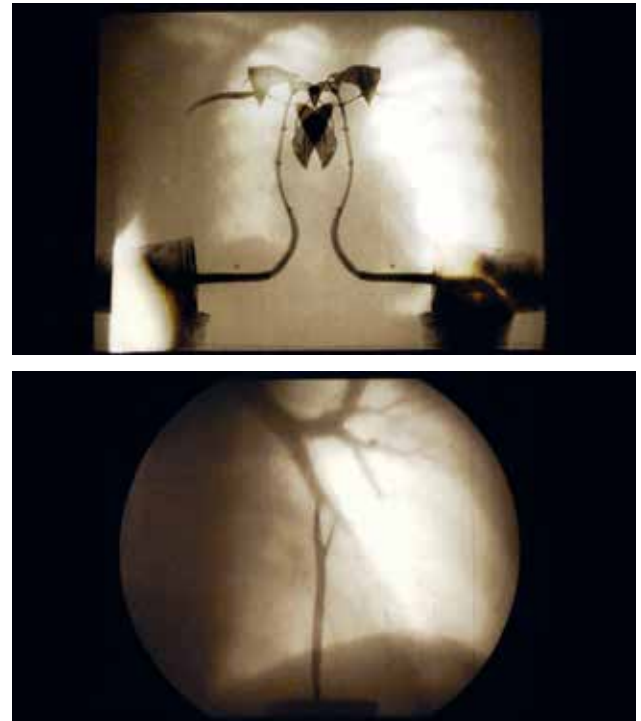
(top) Oklahoma, 2014; (bottom) North Carolina, 2019

Future Library (certificate), 2014





Redwood Preserve, 2019—ongoing



Video stills from *Breathe*, 2019, a collaboration with composer David Stalling



Bitsawit Mariam, 2018

40 KIERAN DODDS

LA-LIKE: Prospecting Palm Fronds (Sunset & Gower), 2017



ZOE CROSER 41

# TO GRAFT

I read recently about a man from the Hupa tribe, a Native American people of Northwestern California, who bound the umbilical cord stump of his child to the slender core of a Douglas fir sapling. The ritual—born out of a cosmology that places humans and plants as kin—grafted the child’s life to one that would likely exceed her own and signaled a commitment to the land.<sup>1</sup>

The story reminds me of an image from my own faith. At the Last Supper, Jesus told his twelve companions: “I am the vine; you are the branches.” He invited them to abide in His presence, grafting their lives to His; only then would they “bear fruit.”<sup>2</sup> Though it manifests differently across world religions, there exists a human desire to bond with a lasting presence (be it the natural world or the supernatural) and to grow in tandem. It might be this innate desire that sustains the bond I have to the tulip tree I planted on Arbor Day in 1990 in my childhood lawn.

The painter Paul Klee connected the creative process to the natural world and likened the artist’s role to a tree trunk: “[The artist’s] position is humble. He himself [*sic*] is not the beauty of the crown; it has

Cara Megan Lewis is  
Co-director of Bridge  
Projects and an artist in  
the collaborative duo  
Díaz Lewis.

CARA MEGAN LEWIS

43



merely passed through him [sic].”<sup>3</sup> This posturing of the artist as conduit for nature’s beauty can be seen in artworks throughout history such as Gordon Matta-Clark’s frenetic *Energy Trees* and Ana Mendieta’s *Siluetas*. In the footsteps of this rich heritage, several artists in *To Bough and To Bend* demonstrate a desire for connection with trees beyond a mere subject-object relationship.

For Ellen Wagener, Pamela Burgess, and Amir Zaki, this familiarity is a result of close study of form and texture. Wagener articulates the bark, leaves, and canopy of trees with fine charcoal marks and equates her drawing practice to prayer. *DH Lawrence Tree* is a portrait of a tree once gazed upon by the author of the same name and the painter Georgia O’Keeffe—a lineage of artists connected through a single sylvan companion. “We are all connected,” says Wagener. “We are all tangled up next to each other, but we all co-exist.”<sup>4</sup> For her drawing in *Landscape Triptych*, Burgess meditated on the shadows cast by a eucalyptus branch. As the sunlight moved across her living room wall, she traced each leaf’s shadow in graphite on paper, sometimes pausing mid-render to catch another fleeting contour. The spectral drawing is exhibited with found objects for contemplation (a root branch and a weed root) in an installation inspired by the Japanese Bonsai Tokonoma display. Zaki uses a GigaPan mount to create a series of

high-resolution photographs which he later digitally stitches into a grid—a process that enhances the minutia and distills the grandiose. His work *Identical Twins* presents two slender trees in an embrace, their mottled lichen-covered trunks run parallel until their branches weave an undistinguishable web and a single crown, pointing to his Zen Buddhist beliefs of interconnectedness.

Several other artists in the exhibition also cite Buddhism as an influence. Miya Ando and Kazuo Kadonaga each have ancestral ties to Buddhist temple cities in Japan. Ando, whose grandfather was a Buddhist priest, demonstrates her familial and religious roots in *Mandala (Slate) 60*. With each circle of the mandala, she layers hand dyed Bodhi (*Ficus religiosa*) skeleton leaves and arranges them into a gradient of color and tone. The lacy leaves, barely there yet forming a radiant whole, recall the Buddhist concept of *sunyata*, affirming the undifferentiated reality out of which all entities and distinctions arise. Kadonaga lives in the prefecture of Tsurugimachi, near the Sea of Japan, where his family owns vast cedar forests and operates one of the largest lumber mills. For his piece *Wood No. 11 DB*, he weds his filial history with the religious roots of the temple village. He instructed millworkers to make equidistant parallel slices halfway into a cedar log; cut against the grain, the wood cracked, revealing zig-zag lines

on the opposite end of the log. Kadonaga shares, “Each living thing, plant or animal, has a soul: my art is revealing the soul.”

When Ralph Eugene Meatyard began his *Zen Series* in the late 1950s, he also seemed to be seeking the soul of the trees around him. His shallow depth photographs of twigs perfectly grazed by a setting sun embody his own attraction to Trappist and Buddhist tenets of attentive presence. The series feels collaborative, as if Meatyard asked the tree to unveil its most vulnerable and tender parts.

Like Kadonaga and Meatyard, photo-based artists Ahram Park and Leonor Jurado choose trees as collaborators. Park intervenes by cutting into and trimming branches and leaves, at times leaving the altered leaves attached to their twigs as he photographs them and at others allowing the cut material to shapeshift in his studio where he documents their decay. In his series of “repeaters,” he shows a single multi-leafed twig in varying states of defoliation, sequences of images that defy natural growth. Self-aware of his human intervention, the resulting images and their titles—*A Recurring Dream* and *Hereditary*—are tender records of Park’s imprint. Similarly, Jurado brings root trimmings inside to create psychological self-portraits, photographing herself reaching for disembodied branches and taking a tangled root mass into her mouth. Her desire for human-nature

connection is palpable. Titled *Unrooted*, Jurado made the work after leaving her home country of Ecuador, the roots evoking her homeland. “[T]he feeling of being deeply displaced greatly debilitated me spiritually,” she says. “I was in exile. I used branches, twigs, and roots, standing for a life that once was and now appears dry and sterile.”<sup>5</sup> In a gesture to place new roots, Jurado printed her deeply intimate images on paper she made by hand from yucca and kozo natural fibers.

The quest for connection to the natural world is a perpetual journey of longing and it is often a spiritual one. The fragility of a lasting bond keeps us in a posture of seeking. The creative practice, too, embodies this pursuit. As evidenced by the artworks described above, gestures, meditations, and interventions—like the images of the bound umbilicus and grapevine—remind us of the potential to form deeper ties.

#### NOTES

1. M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native America Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Oakland: University of California Press: 2005), 58.
2. John 15:5 (New International Version).
3. Roger Cook, *The Tree of Life: Image for the Cosmos* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1974), 31.

4. Ellen Wagener, “Artist interviewed by Jane Milosch, Dubuque Museum of Art,” Digital Dubuque, 2016, <https://vimeo.com/180315826>.
5. Leonor Jurado, email message to author, April 3, 2020.



Identical Twins, 2020

50 AMIR ZAKI

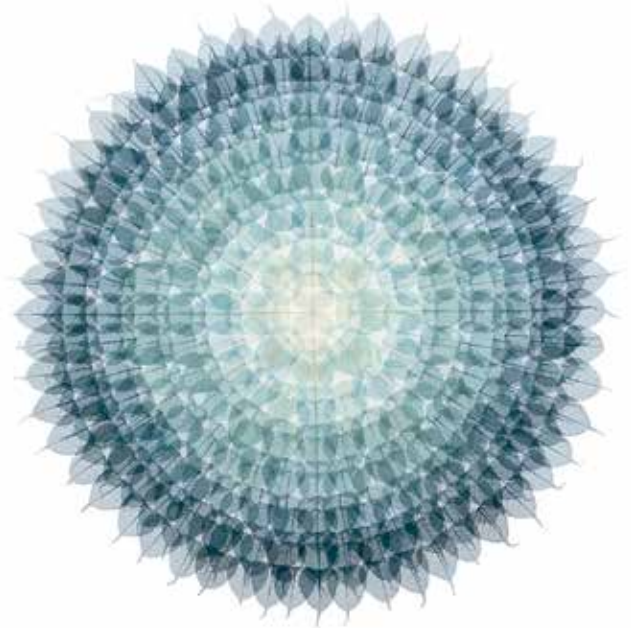


Landscape Triptych, 2020

PAMELA BURGESS 51



DH Lawrence Tree, 2019



Mandala (Slate) 60, 2018



Wood No. 11 DB, 1999

54 KAZUO KADONAGA



(top) *Untitled*, c. 1960; (bottom) *Zen #2*, 1959



RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD 55



Blind Melon (Lincoln Park), 2020

56 AHRAM PARK



Untitled, 2009

LEONOR JURADO 57

# TO SOMERSAULT

LINNÉA GABRIELLA  
SPRANSY NEUSS

Linnéa Gabriella  
Spransy Neuss is  
Co-director of Bridge  
Projects and an artist  
who mostly paints and  
recently acquired an  
additional last name.

Have you noticed how, on hot days in July, the horizon curls in shimmering somersaults over a wheatfield? Or how the fierce purity of snow under strong sun corrodes the boundary between this and that, fusing the whole landscape into a single blazing glare? It is common, but not at all logical, that a nightingale should sing through the entire night, a waterfall freeze into lace, a willow flounce her skirt in a spring breeze and break your heart. In moments like these, there is a kind of drunken excess to nature—it tilts and wobbles in ecstasy.

“What is all this juice and joy?” the Victorian poet Gerard Manly Hopkins asks, recognizing that there is a kind of “sweet being” in the freshness of Eden whose fantastic designs are renewed endlessly.<sup>1</sup> And he was not the only artist to do so. Painters and poets, sculptors and photographers, have long reveled in the intense liveliness of even the most meager scrap of nature. Charles E. Burchfield, for instance, was mesmerized by ordinary landscapes. All of his watercolors strain to capture the kaleidoscopic antics



of light on leaf, water, open field, bright summer day. Even in *Windy Trees In the Sunlight*, an otherwise bleak winter landscape looks as though it were whipped into a dervish dance, every bare branch wild with electricity.

Corita Kent was also animated by this spirit of play as both a teacher and artist. She called her work in the classroom “plorking,” a portmanteau of play and working. It is hard to argue that the collage-maximalism and vivid color of her screen-prints are anything but, adding a lighthearted wink to even her most pointed political works. Serious commitment to continual plorking led her through a variety of mediums and subjects, and late in life she began painting hundreds of watercolor landscapes. These untitled works are every bit as frolicsome as her screenprints. To the end, she maintained a stylistic *elán* all her own, and when perhaps she needed solace in nature, she found a happy kinship between her natural artistic sensibility and that of sundrenched meadows.

Markers and felt tip pens are also perfect tools to convey nimble visual play, and Ben Sanders uses them to good effect on blue-chip gallery stationery. Under Blum & Poe letterhead he draws pert stylizations of bonsai, rendered in hot pink, acid yellow, and Corvette red; Sanders drew more than 200 of them while his young daughter napped in his studio. Trying

this and that, he plays around with a menagerie of shapes and silhouettes, producing in 20-minute bursts what would otherwise require decades to coax from living trees. No doubt, a slew of these high-key drawings spark delight, but they also bely subtle meditations on the nature of art and value, time and growth, while nearby an infant peacefully sleeps.

Kate Parsons uses virtual reality applications to pull similarly substantive themes from what is often merely wiz-bang technology. In *Dark Spring*, participants persuade crocuses and tulips to emerge from decaying soil, encouraging them to bloom midair and float free into the darkness. Like an iridescent cloud of bubbles, they drift into an uncertain future. To take part, the viewer must kneel and stand in physical manifestations of the dance between humble gentleness and strong dignity that life itself requires.

And the body is obviously essential to life, to play, to exploration. Any child can demonstrate the joy of physical exploration: skipping, stomping, pushing, tugging, learning...knowing. But for over-familiar adults, the “ordinary” has blunted the tang of our physical world. In *Irrational Exuberance*, Ben Vance attempts to spark that initial awe once again by using virtual reality to place the body in deep space. Here, massive exoplanets swing into view around the warm crescent of an alien world. Standing on an asteroid, we are invited to explore, to push, to skip,

to stomp or bend low and notice spindly crystals that branch into whimsical, alien trees.

A sort of whimsical, alien tree of life is also what Chris Garofalo has been articulating; her chosen medium though, is clay. With it, she makes sculptures that display an obsession with ornament and a quixotic amalgamation of animal and plant forms all articulated with breathtaking craftsmanship. By using the basic structures that organic life favors, mixing and matching them in a gleeful flirtation with near familiarity and splendid, detailed excess, Garofalo mimics these same qualities abundant in the natural world without ever literally representing it. What results are fired clay flights of fancy, displayed under curved glass vitrines like a cabinet of true curiosities.

And finally there is Patty Wickman, in whose painting two girls are almost lost in the low umbrella of a manzanita tree. It is a scene whose color and attentiveness carries all the delight and simplicity of a garden romp on Saturday. G. K. Chesterton comes to mind: “Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, ‘Do it again’; and the grown-up person does it again until he [*sic*] is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to

exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, ‘Do it again’ to the sun; and every evening, ‘Do it again’ to the moon. It may not be an automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them.”<sup>2</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Spring,” *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press), 67.
2. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 37.



Windy Trees in Sunlight, c. 1917

66 CHARLES E. BURCHFIELD



Untitled, 1983

CORITA KENT 67



68 BEN SANDERS

Bonsai, 2019; Bonsai, 2019

Stacka *Hydnum Pyrenula Macrospora*, 2012



CHRIS GAROFALO 69





Video stills from *Irrational Exuberance: Prologue*, 2020



Video stills from *The Dark Spring VR*, 2018

# TO ENDURE

As the oldest living organisms on Earth, trees leave behind clear evidence of their adaptation and survival, and to a large extent, offer clues about their surrounding environments. Each year of a tree's life adds another growth ring to its trunk, creating a record of its age, past experiences, and traumas. Fittingly, several artists in *To Bough and To Bend* have chosen trees as their subject matter through which to explore themes of suffering and death.

For example, in his photographic series *Hang Trees*, Ken Gonzales-Day documents sites of lynching in California. By depicting the trees and environs used for these crimes, the artist offers a “physical testimony” to the many men and women lynched at more than 300 sites. In *Two men were taken.*, a dirt road flanked by a dilapidated fence leads to a pair of old California oak trees, one on each side of the road. The entwined branches create an archway over the road surrounded by a landscape of dried grasses and yellow wildflowers; a hint of the moon peeks through the warm sky. Gonzales-Day's tree portraits confront California's

Vicki Phung Smith  
is Director of Client  
Relations and Gallery  
Operations at Bridge  
Projects, and feels  
most at home when  
camping in nature.

VICKI PHUNG SMITH

dark history and, by association, the ongoing racial struggles in America—not as binary (black/white) but as a collective other: African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Chinese Americans all suffered these atrocities. Gonzales-Day’s photographs act as witnesses to historical violence. These trees were present before and remained after the people were hanged.

Lucas Reiner continues the exploration of trees and their cyclical narrative of life and death. In 2008, St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., commissioned the artist to produce a Stations of the Cross series—15 scenes, conducive to meditation and prayer, of Jesus Christ on the day of His crucifixion. Reiner collaborated with German master printer Clemens Bütig Editionen to produce etchings that portray Christ as different kinds of trees on His journey to the cross. Through anthropomorphic postures and intricate marks, the scenes poetically convey a narrative of suffering and transcendence.

Trees also take on a human persona in the work of Tim Hawkinson who transforms organic materials into imaginative sculptures that confront our relationships to nature and mortality. *Sebastian*, referencing the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, consists of two Christmas trees, one awkwardly inverted and grafted to the other, with handmade arrows taking the place of branches, piercing through the trunks. The



saint, who was tied to a tree and shot with arrows, is memorialized in the forms of the tree itself, and the arrows, made from the wood of trees, reference the interdependence of suffering and martyrdom.

The symbiotic suffering of a community and the landscape is the subject of Billy Joe Miller's work. Recurring forms of arches, doorways, windows, and wreaths evoke portals of transformation and awakening. The artist uses natural materials and collaborates with people from the local community to build site-specific installations. For *To Bough and To Bend*, Miller and Nathan Weick worked with a Bureau of Land Management forester to create *Shasta Wreath*, a large-scale wreath measuring 100 inches in diameter made from charred branches of Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir, and incense cedar trees from the 2018 Carr Fire in Northern California. Borrowing from ancient symbols of welcome and abundance, *Shasta Wreath* memorializes a formerly abundant landscape transformed by tragic events, creating a haunting relic.

Another artist haunted by time and place, Robert Adams has devoted his prolific career to documenting the changing landscapes of California, Colorado, and Oregon. His black and white photographs capture paradise lost—the fragile yet enduring beauty of the land as it suffers under human impact. In *Looking toward Los Angeles, Interstate 10, west*

*edge of Redlands, California*, trees and shrubs are foregrounded, peppering both sides of the major interstate, while hints of human development loom in the background of barrenness and smog. Adams's solemn black and white photographs act as elegies to a former landscape, a former paradise.

In Heather Rasmussen's photographs, still life compositions are less solemn but a reminder of the inevitable—that the human body and organic matter are seemingly inseparable. The artist's altered representations create tension between abundant shapes and decayed forms by strategically placing mirrors and plants in her scenes to obscure or duplicate her limbs. For instance, *Untitled diptych (Body and palm frond on blue)* depicts Rasmussen, nude and resembling a seed, nestled inside a large, dried palm frond holding an arched, narrow mirror above her body; the second image shows the same frond, empty yet vibrant. The diptych portrays the changing cycle of the body, whether it's growing life or in a state of decay.

As shown in these artists' works, trees are a poignant subject matter for illustrating cycles of life and death, abundance and famine, joy and suffering. With each new cycle of growth—the budding and flowering, the sprouting, browning, and shedding of leaves—trees remind us of the passage of time, urging us to grow and trust in the process.





Two men were taken., 2007



Shasta Wreath, 2020, in collaboration with Nathan Weick



Looking toward Los Angeles, Interstate 10, west edge of Redlands, California, 1982



Fifteen Stations (detail of Station XI—Crucifixion), 2010



86 TIM HAWKINSON

Sebastian, 2015

Untitled diptych (Body and palm frond on blue), 2020



HEATHER RASMUSSEN 87

# TO FORGET

Once upon a time, long ago, in an Orthodox abbey there lived an old monk. Pamve was his name. He planted a dead tree on a mountainside. He ordered his young pupil Ivan Kolov to water the tree every day until it came back to life. Every morning Ivan went on his way with a pail, climbed the mountain and watered the barren tree. And in the evening after dark had fallen he returned to the monastery. He did this for three years in a row. And one fine day he arrived at the top and saw that the tree was covered with blossoms. You know, sometimes I say to myself, if every single day at exactly the same time, one were to perform the same single act, like a ritual, the world would be changed.

—Andrei Tarkovsky, *The Sacrifice*<sup>1</sup>

There's a recurring memory from when I was very little. One day I found a peculiar dead leaf in the park and, curious as I was, I put it under my tongue. Although the taste was repugnant and caused me

ALEJANDRO FIGUEREDO  
DIAZ-PERERA

Alejandro Figueredo  
Diaz-Perera is an independent curator, artist, and collaborator in the artist duo Diaz Lewis.

to spit involuntarily, I have come to nurture this memory with nostalgia for a guileless time when knowledge presented itself in the most spontaneous ways. Even now, every time I can't remember a word, and I have it on the tip of my tongue, the furtive taste of that dead leaf returns.

Like an ouroboros, the world is its memory. Recent studies in the field of biology and behavioral sciences suggest that plants can remember. For example, evolutionary ecologist Monica Gagliano's experiment with *Mimosa pudica*s suggests that a form of molecular "memory" allows a tree's previous experiences to influence how it responds to its environment. The debate over plants' consciousness has raged in scientific circles for well over a century—at least since 1880 when Charles Darwin observed that stressed-out flora can't rest. Nature, the greatest artist of all, is an "anamnesic" creator continuously renewing the viridian bewilderment that is life.

Artist Gil Delindro spends time wandering in solitude through forests in his home country of Portugal and traveling to remote locations to listen to the sounds of the wilderness. For the Homeric Greeks, *Kleos* (glory) was made of song. Vibrations in the air contained the measure and memory of a person's life; to listen was therefore to learn what endures. In their view, Delindro would be an enlightened sage.

His sound sculpture *un (measurements) #3* is evident of the "cyclical recurrence of all things" which Nietzsche pointed out in his diatribe with a notorious "dwarf."<sup>2</sup> A dead tree weighing 330 lbs spins like a vinyl record on a rotating base. Slender twigs installed on stands read its surface with contact microphones that amplify the vibrations of its circular movement. Every time the piece is installed, the position of the mics has to be remeasured, thus the title.

What is a dead tree if not a microsystem of interconnected living organisms? Mold, fungi, and termites inhabit *un (measurements) #3*, carving intricate labyrinths in the wood and making ground for new sounds to emerge in the future. For Delindro, sound lives in the constant collapse of the present into the future, proof of the instability within all forms.

Tal Shochat, a photographer from Israel, uses a compelling sense of unnatural nature to capture images of trees. She prepares the outdoor landscape like a studio interior as she might for a portrait, white backdrop and all. Her triptych *Lessons in Time 3 (Yellow Apple Tree)* shows the cycle of the seasons. It's difficult to find contemporary landscape photography from Israel that does not have a political framework of some sort; but in Shochat's work the dusty land seems to bloom indifferent to politics. Nature ultimately wins the game of time and, like a reincarnation, life continues untroubled.

Since the dawn of civilization, trees have not only witnessed human history, they have helped shape it. Few other plants have held such sway over human imagination than the ficus. Each year thousands of pilgrims travel to Mahamevnāwa Gardens in Sri Lanka to visit the sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Tree. Planted in 288 BC, the oldest living human-planted tree in the world, it's said to be the southern branch from the original *Ficus religiosa* in India under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.<sup>3</sup> In Egypt, the Pharaohs took dried figs with them to the grave to sustain the souls in their journey to the afterlife. In the Bible, Hezekiah, King of Judah, who was “sick even to death” with a plague of boils, recovered after applying a paste of crushed figs to his skin.<sup>4</sup> When the Portuguese explorers reached the Caribbean islands, they saw many strangler figs growing along the coast. Masses of roots hung from their branches like matted strands of hair. They named the island Los Barbados, meaning “the bearded ones.” Ficus can grow almost anywhere, even on top of other trees, and could by themselves regrow an entire rainforest.<sup>5</sup>

In *To Bough and To Bend*, this amazing species is featured in the work of Todd Gray, maybe as a metaphor of resilience. *Bamboo Hood* consists of a photo of a bound and hooded figure, a European bust, contrasted against a larger photo of a bamboo garden in Ghana (where Gray maintains a studio) and an image of a ficus

tree in between, all surrounded by ornate frames. His work is a collage of history and symbols composing a narrative of memory and our own forgetfulness.

Gray knows the bitter colonial history of Africa—how privilege and ideas of landscape and painting feed pernicious narratives—and how photography also serves in power's toolkit. By photographing gardens and adding lavish frames in between, he reminds the viewer of the medium's limits. What is outside of the composition? What part of the story is not being told?

Another dreamlike composition is *Walter's Tree, 8 Mar 14*, a delicate painting by Patty Wickman in which she uses quick brushstrokes to create a wistful vision of a fading instant. Walter Kennedy, a kind, elderly man who lived in Wickman's neighborhood, passed away by the time she made the painting of his mulberry tree. The tree became an inexorable memorial to her neighbor's absence.

Harold Mendez's *Comma*, a branch cutting that looks like the leg of a horse, makes me think of Jacques-Louis David's painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. Mendez's work invites us to pause for a moment—it is a visual spatial mark, a signifier of austerity and a pause in the narrative of the show. Informing the Colombian-Mexican-American artist's material choices is his research of different cultural burial sites and rituals of passing: found objects, photographs, organic matter, and pigments. Starting with an excavation-like process,

he then alters and distresses the object, as he did for *Comma*, covering it with a paste of cochineal insects, ultimately resulting in a sort of metamorphosis.

When reflecting on these works a quote from Etel Adnan comes to mind: "...the universe is itself the glue that keeps it going, therefore it is memory in action and in essence, in becoming and in being. Because it remembers itself, it exists. Because it exists, it remembers."<sup>6</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Andrei Tarkovsky, *The Sacrifice*, (1986; Paris: Argos Films, 1986), 35mm. The last work of Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky. The opening monologue is told by a father to his young son as they plant a barren Japanese tree. Like a tautological ritual, they perform the same act as the monk of the story.

2. Nietzsche's "dwarf" appears early in part three of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the section titled "Of the vision and the riddle." (176 ff.) What Zarathustra recounts is generally regarded as the fullest expression of the Nietzschean doctrine of the Eternal Return. Interesting to note that the "dwarf" is also mentioned extensively in Tarkovsky's film *The Sacrifice*.

3. According to the fifth-century epic poem the *Mahavamsa*, India's emperor at the time, Ashoka the Great, sent a branch

from the Bodhi Tree with his daughter to Sri Lanka as an offering to King Devanampiya Tissa. It was then replanted there and has been protected since. The original Bodhi Tree remained in India, but it didn't endure the changes of power. According to a seventh-century Chinese traveler, "Every time the tree was destroyed, a new tree was planted in the same place." Today there is still a tree in the place where Buddha sat, at the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, India.

4. 2 Kings 20:7 and Isaiah 38:21 (New International Version).

5. Mike Shanahan, "The Tree that Shaped Human History," *BBC*, January 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170116-the-tree-that-shaped-human-history>.

6. Etel Adnan, *Night* (New York: Nightboat Books, 2016), 15.



(un) measurements #3, 2020

96 GIL DELINDRO

Lessons in Time 3 (Yellow Apple Tree), 2016



TAL SHOCHAT 97



Bamboo Hood, 2019



Comma, 2019

## IMAGE CREDITS

Cover (left): Zoe Crosher, *LA-LIKE: Prospecting Palm Fronds (Sunset & Gower)*, 2017. Unique bronze cast. 65 × 11 × 12 in. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Cover (right): Zoe Crosher, *LA-LIKE: Prospecting Palm Fronds (Sunset & Harvard)*, 2017. Unique bronze cast. 67 × 18 × 14 in. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Endpapers (front and back): Ahram Park, *Hereditary*, 2020. Dye sublimation prints. 6 × 4 in. each. Open edition.

Pages 28–29: Installation view of *To Bough and To Bend*, 2020. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Artworks, left to right, by Heather Rasmussen, Chris Garofalo, Todd Gray.

Page 36: Daniel Cheek, *Oklahoma*, 2014 (printed 2020). Gelatin silver print. 16 × 20 in. Open edition.

Page 36: Daniel Cheek, *North Carolina*, 2019 (printed 2020). Gelatin silver print. 8 × 10 in. Open edition.

Page 37: Katie Paterson, *Future Library (certificate)*, 2014. Two-sided foil block print on paper, front view of certificate. 16 ½ × 11 11/16 in. © Katie Paterson. Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York.

Page 38: Jarrett Mellenbruch, *Redwood Preserve*, 2019–ongoing. Recovered redwood slab, sawhorses, white paper brochure. 31 ½ × 12 × 34 in.

Page 39: Siobhan McDonald, collaboration with composer David Stalling, video stills from *Breathe*, 2019. Film, stereo sound incorporating plant, tree, and human breath recordings. Duration: 3 min., 35 sec. Film editor: Christopher Ash.

Page 40: Kieran Dodds, *Bitsawit Mariam*, 2018. Archival photographic print. 50 × 37 ½ in. Edition of 3 + 1 AP.

Page 41: Zoe Crosher, *LA-LIKE: Prospecting Palm Fronds (Sunset & Gower)*, 2017. Unique bronze cast. 65 × 11 × 12 in.

Page 44: Installation view of *To Bough and To Bend*, 2020. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Artworks, front to back, by Kazuo Kadoonaga, Amir Zaki, Daniel Cheek.

Page 50: Amir Zaki, *Identical Twins*, 2020. Archival pigment photograph with UV coating. 75 × 60 in. Edition of 2 + 2 APs. © Amir Zaki. Courtesy of the artist and Ed Cella Art + Architecture, Los Angeles.

Page 51: Pamela Burgess, *Landscape Triptych*, 2020. Weed root salvaged from Elysian Park, concrete, drawing. 57 × 40 × 4 in.

Page 52: Ellen Wagener, *DH Lawrence Tree*, 2019. Pastel on paper. 60 × 60 in.

Page 53: Miya Ando, *Mandala (Slate) 60*, 2018. Dyed Bodhi (*Ficus religiosa*) skeleton leaves, monofilament, archival ragboard. 60 × 60 in.

Page 54: Kazuo Kadoonaga, *Wood No. 11 DB*, 1999. Cedar. 28 × 39 × 40 in. © Kazuo Kadoonaga. Courtesy of the artist and Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles.

Page 55: Ralph Eugene Meatyard, *Untitled*, c. 1960 (printed c. 1960). Gelatin silver print. 6 ¾ × 6 ½ in. (image and sheet); 14 × 11 in. (mount). © The Estate of Ralph Eugene Meatyard. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York and Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco.

Page 55: Ralph Eugene Meatyard, *Zen #2, 1959* (printed 1959). Gelatin silver print. 7 ¼ × 7 in. (image & sheet); 14 × 11 in. (mount). © The Estate of Ralph Eugene Meatyard. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York and Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco.

Page 56: Ahram Park, *Blind Melon (Lincoln Park)*, 2020. Dye sublimation print in artist frame. 19 ¼ × 17 ¼ in. Edition of 5 + 2 APs.

Page 57: Leonor Jurado, *Untitled*, 2009. Inkjet prints on kozo and yucca paper. 5 ¾ × 4 ¾ in. (image size).

Pages 60–61: Installation view of *To Bough and To Bend*, 2020. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Artworks, left to right, by Ben Sanders, Corita Kent, Patty Wickman.

Page 66: Charles E. Burchfield, *Windy Trees in Sunlight*, c. 1917. Watercolor and gouache on paper. 20 × 14 in. © Charles E. Burchfield Foundation. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York.

Page 67: Corita Kent, *Untitled*, 1983. Watercolor on paper. 6 × 8 in. Courtesy of the Corita Art Center, Immaculate Heart Community.

Page 68: Ben Sanders, *Bonsai*, 2019. Marker on gallery stationary. 11 × 8 ½ in.

Page 68: Ben Sanders, *Bonsai*, 2019. Marker on gallery stationary. 11 × 8 ½ in.

Page 69: Chris Garofalo, *Stacka Hydnum Pyrenula Macrospora*, 2012. Glazed porcelain. 16 × 7 × 7 in. (ceramic); 25 × 14 × 14 in. (container). © Chris Garofalo. Courtesy of the artist and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Page 70: Patty Wickman, *Circumscribe*, 2017–2019. Oil on linen. 84 × 104 in.

Page 72: Ben Vance, video stills from *Irrational Exuberance: Prologue*, 2020. Software, computer, monitor, headset, and signed print. Edition of 5.

Page 73: Kate Parsons, video stills from *The Dark Spring VR*, 2018. Software, computer, monitor, headset, and signed print. Edition of 10.

Page 77: Installation view of *To Bough and To Bend*, 2020. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Artworks, front to back, by Harold Mendez, Ken Gonzales-Day.

Pages 80–81: Installation view of *To Bough and To Bend*, 2020. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Artworks, left to right, by Zoe Crosher, Leonor Jurado, Tim Hawkinson, Charles E. Burchfield, Ralph Eugene Meatyard.

Page 82: Ken Gonzales-Day, *Two men were taken.*, 2007. Lightjet on aluminum. 39 × 72 in. Edition of 5 + 2 APs. © Ken Gonzales-Day. Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus, Los Angeles.

Page 83: Billy Joe Miller, in collaboration with Nathan Weick, *Shasta Wreath*, 2020. Organic materials obtained in collaboration with a Bureau of Land Management forester. 100 in. diameter (wreath); 100 in. diameter (ash circle).

Page 84: Robert Adams, *Looking toward Los Angeles, Interstate 10, west edge of Redlands, California*. 1982 (printed 1998). Gelatin silver print. 11 × 14 in. (sheet). © Robert Adams. Courtesy of the artist, Amy Whiteside, and Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Page 85: Lucas Reiner, *Fifteen Stations* (detail of *Station XI—Crucifixion*), 2010. Portfolio of 15 prints: drypoint, aquatint, spitbite, etching on Hahnemühle, Bütten 300gr paper. 16 × 13 ¼ in. each print. Courtesy of the Artist and Clemens Büntig Editionen. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Page 86: Tim Hawkinson, *Sebastian*, 2015. Christmas trees, palm branches, seed pods, sunflower seeds, coconut, acorns, avocado pit, corn husk, pomegranate skin, leaves, pine cone, twine, and raffia. 92 × 31 × 38 in. © Tim Hawkinson. Courtesy of the artist and Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco.

Page 87: Heather Rasmussen, *Untitled diptych (Body and palm frond on blue)*, 2020. Pigment prints. 20 × 26 ¾ in. each. Edition of 3. © Heather Rasmussen. Courtesy of the artist and The Pit, Los Angeles.

Page 96: Gil Delindro, (*un*) *measurements #3*, 2020. Oak tree, four prepared transducer microphones, sound mixer, and four speakers. 108 × 53 × 58 in. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Page 97: Tal Shochat, *Lessons in Time 3 (Yellow Apple Tree)*, 2016. C-prints, mounted and framed, 3 total. 40 × 44 in. each. Edition of 6. © Tal Shochat. Courtesy of the artist and Meislin Projects, New York.

Page 98: Todd Gray, *Bamboo Hood*, 2019. Archival pigment prints, artist frames, UV laminate. 30 ¾ × 42 ¼ × 3 ½ in.

Page 99: Harold Mendez, *Comma*, 2019. Wood, cochineal, graphite, indigo, color pencil, and steel. 12 × 17 × 3 ¼ in. © Harold Mendez. Courtesy of the artist and Patron Gallery, Chicago. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

All of the images reproduced in this volume are copyrighted by their makers, or by the respective estates. Every effort has been made to contact all such parties to obtain official permission to reproduce, and we are very grateful for the kind cooperation extended by the artists included in this book, or by their families, estates, or representatives. In some cases, their permission to reproduce was conditioned upon the publication of a credit line or notice of copyright, which have been included in the above image credits.

Botanical specimens on pp. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 105, 106, 108, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116, 119, and 120 are reproduced courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC, which has designated these images as available under public domain CC0. Botanical specimens on pp. 7, 107, 109, 111, and 117 are reproduced courtesy of The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London, licensed under version 4.0 of the Creative Commons CC-BY license.

For their overwhelmingly generous support of Bridge Projects, this book, and *To Bough and To Bend*, we offer special thanks to our funders Roberta and Howard Ahmanson.

For devoting themselves fully to Bridge Projects, we thank our Board of Directors: Jonathan Anderson, Ann Hirou, Matthew Milliner, and Jane Milosch, as well as our advisors James Davison Hunter and Arvind Bhabri.

We are ever grateful for the wide array of brilliant artists who each gave their time, effort, and unique perspectives on the meaning of trees. They have been the heartwood of this show.

We extend thanks to the generous gallerists who joined us in forming that heartwood by lending beautiful artworks. We are honored by their confidence in the merits of *To Bough and To Bend*. They include: James Cohan Gallery; Nellie Scott and Ollivian Cha, Corita Art, Center, Immaculate Heart Community; Peter Colon, DC Moore Gallery; Edward Cella, Edward Cella Art + Architecture; Brooke Corley, Hosfelt Gallery; Luis De Jesus and Meghan Gordon, Luis De Jesus Gallery; Rhona Hoffman and Jared Quinton, Rhona Hoffman Gallery; Andrea Meislin, Meislin Projects; Takayoshi Nonaka-Hill and Rodney Nonaka-Hill, Nonaka-Hill Gallery; Olivia McManus, PATRON Gallery; The Pit, Los Angeles.

We are grateful for Amy Whiteside's personal loan of her Robert Adams photograph. Her contribution and trust are inestimable.

For their provision of tasteful furnishings for the gallery, we are grateful to Timothy and Hannah Weaver of Broken Dishes.

To Lucas Near-Verbrugghe, who installed said artworks with confident professionalism and the helpful zest of his innate humor: thank you.

We are indebted to Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera, dedicated volunteer co-curator and essayist as well as honorary team member at Bridge Projects, for the length and breadth of the preparation, staging, and completion of this show. We are most grateful for his eagerness, expertise, and commitment to the success of this project.

We express deep appreciation for the plethora of speakers, experts, and artists who share their scholarship, creativity, and time to enrich our experience of trees. They include: Dr. Kimberly Ball, Tongva Elder Julia Bogany, Michal David, Dr. Wendy Furman-Adams, Dr. Bryan C. Keene, and Dr. Jennifer Sliwka.

For Benjamin Del Castillo's artistry in translating our curatorial vision into a beautiful video segment, and Adela Cruz's accompanying musical score, we are grateful.

For her careful handling of this book's texts, we thank copyeditor Nancy Zastudil/The Necessarian, LLC.

For attentive, dynamic translation of the Bridge Projects vision, we thank Kimberly Varella of Content Object for this book design and David Yun and Zak Klaucek of Wax Studio for the brand design.

For her seasoned advice, and keeping us out of needless trouble, we thank Sarah Odenkirk, Art Converge.

For her dedication and care for the Bridge Projects exhibition space, we thank our property manager Nannette D'Aquila.

Additionally, we thank the following individuals for their ongoing support of Bridge Projects: Lynn Aldrich, John Chan and Grace Oh, Christian and Christina Gonzalez-Ho, Jasmine McNeal, Alex Neuss, John Silvis, and Clover Xuesong Zhou.

This publication was printed in conjunction with the exhibition *To Bough and To Bend* curated by Alejandro Figueredo Diaz-Perera, Cara Megan Lewis, Vicki Phung Smith, Linnéa Gabriella Spransy Neuss, and Michael Wright.

## BRIDGE PROJECTS

6820 Santa Monica Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90038  
www.bridgeprojects.com

ISBN 978-1-7336400-2-2  
First Edition, Spring 2020  
© Bridge Projects

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from the publisher and the artists.

Editors—  
Cara Megan Lewis, Linnéa Gabriella Spransy Neuss, Vicki Phung Smith, and Michael Wright

Book Design—  
Content Object Design Studio  
Kimberly Varella, Art Direction  
Sam Wagner, Design Assistant  
David Evans Frantz, Project Coordinator

Copyeditor—  
Nancy Zastudil, The Necessarian, LLC

Installation Photography—  
Robert Wedemeyer

Color Separations—  
Echelon Color, Santa Monica

This book was set in Bridge Projects Display (David Yun and Zak Klauck, Wax Studios), Domaine Text (Klim Foundry), Albertus (Monotype), Graphik (Commercial Type), and Ogg (Sharp Type) and printed on Eames Diffused Architecture, Munken Kristall, and Fedrigoni Sirio (Sabbia).

Printed by Verona Libri, Italy



Robert Adams  
b. 1937; lives in Astoria, OR

Notes—I often think of a line by Edward Thomas: “trees and us—imperfect friends.” *Cottonwoods* have been our friends for a long while. The Arapaho believed that the stars came from cottonwoods, from the glistening sap at the joints of twigs. Immigrant wagon trains followed along from one grove to the next, with cottonwoods serving as landmarks, shelter, and fuel. But the human side of this friendship has weakened. Agribusiness now wages wars on cottonwoods because the trees compete for water, and suburban developers replace them with conveniently small but ecologically disruptive species like Russian olive. Main Street in Longmont used to be lined with cottonwoods, but they were all cut down.

Excerpted from: Robert Adams, *Cottonwoods* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2017), 85.



## Daniel Cheek

b. 1978; lives in Tucson, AZ

Notes——The common and never lowly *oak* comes to mind. The ubiquitous tree flourishes in any climate in the United States, and its quiet symmetry is reassuring and powerful. The oak was once the most valued trees in the creation of the West, with Oakland, having one of the largest and oldest native oak forests in the world. The entire forest was decimated to build San Francisco and Oakland and to fuel The First Transcontinental Railroad. Now, the oak perseveres on mountains overlooking the Sonoran Desert and in forests of the Midwest, standing with a solid presence that doesn't shout but reassures.



## Gil Delindro

b. 1989; lives in Porto, Portugal

Notes——I remember when a high school teacher mentioned how six *ginkgo* trees were the only ones discovered to survive the nuclear blast of Hiroshima—an image of an incredible resilience I hadn't considered before. Until then, I thought that nature was a humble fragile thing, but with the years passing I have come to realize how brutal, violent, and omnipotent nature actually is! No matter what we create, it will always be insignificant next to the force that drives all plants, planets, and galaxies. Something way beyond our understanding always keeps moving! The ginkgo is one of the oldest specimens still alive today, a tree that coexisted with the dinosaurs, preserved for more than 200 million years. I have kept one for 11 years, and it surely keeps my priorities in perspective! It is believed that Lao Tzu, the Chinese author of *Tao Te Ching*, planted a ginkgo tree that is still alive today in Louguantai Temple, southern Shaanxi province, the region with the oldest known millennial exemplars.



## Harold Mendez

b. 1977; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——I would choose to be a *Cecilia* tree for its symbolic importance and presence throughout the Americas. It is considered to link the underworld, the terrestrial, and the heavens.



## Ben Vance

b. 1979; lives in Los Angeles

Notes——What is a tree? Everyone knows yet it isn't clearly defined. It seems to be a pattern we recognize. This tree pattern must surely be out there in multitudes, among the billions of exoplanets we think exist! Imagine that, the startling image of the familiar among the utterly foreign. That is the tree I'd like to be—the *first tree we discover beyond Earth*.



## Tal Shochat

b. 1974; lives in Tel Aviv, Israel

Notes——I might choose the most ordinary, common tree: the *Ficus religiosa*. The tree is considered sacred because Gautama Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment underneath its branches. Siddhartha's determination sitting under the tree became a prominent symbol of the Middle Way, a path that is beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence. And the tree? It may be the living symbol of this Middle Way. Its limbs bring harmony between the earthly and the heavenly—between the tangible and the sublime, between suffering and awakening, between the contradictions of the soul in the navel of the world. So I, too, would choose wisdom.



## Todd Gray

b. 1954; lives in Los Angeles

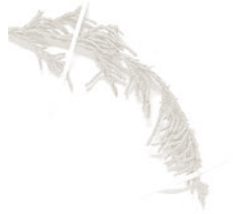
Notes——I will join my voice to the chorus of artists that selected the *Bodhi Tree* as their preferred metamorphosed incarnation. Giving support and shelter to Siddhartha as he evolves into Buddha consciousness has to be the pinnacle of arboreal experience.



## Zoe Crosher

b. 1975; lives in New York

Notes——I would love to be a *weeping willow* tree—in fact, I've often driven by them and wished I were one! Any type of weeping willow is fine as long as it is near water, gracefully moving in the wind, sweeping the ground, so calm, relaxed, and elegant in their poise. I never thought of the trees as weeping, only tenderly and gently swaying with whatever ebbs and flows, rooted deeply and grandly to the earth.



## Billy Joe Miller

b. 1975; lives in Albuquerque, NM

Notes——Over two years ago, I moved to a property near Albuquerque surrounded by very old *aliquator junipers*. In a single tree one can see a patchwork of different variations in surface: red, brown madrona-like skin; moss and lichen covered sections; ghostly white barks and trunks. The checked bark changes in color and size as they age, falling off the dead limbs and burnished by the elements over hundreds of years. As these trees cling to life, new life will come in red vine branches that slowly snake right over the old limbs. I climbed one once, and I was stunned to find a big red vein of new life coming up from its center, like a hidden heart artery. Finding the rare larger trees, many of which are over 500 years old, is like discovering a mythical creature hidden in the forest. I am in awe of their presence, and they make me cry.



## Jarrett Mellenbruch

b. 1971; lives in Kansas City, MO

Notes——Imagining myself as a tree, I have been an ancient *olive* tree providing precious oil for the Mediterranean diet and offering my branches as a sign of peace. Other days I'm a giant *sequoia*, dwarfing visitors with my size and age as they stand in my primeval forest. During my time as an *American elm* in Central Park, my brilliant yellow fall leaf canopy offered shade to strolling couples. I imagined being a giant *hinoki* tree looking down on a small house in Missouri. I can see a man cleaning out his grandmother's gutters, looking up at my crown where a vibrating blur of bees gathered nectar from my flowers. Today though, I would like to be a *coccoloba palm* tree. Growing nearly horizontal, I lazily lean out over sand toward the blue water as someone strings up a hammock on my smooth trunk.



## Siobhan McDonald

b. 1968; lives in Dublin, Ireland

Notes——If I could be a tree, I would choose to be a *ginkgo*. Revered for its beauty and longevity, the ginkgo is a witness to human history, unchanged for more than 200 million years.



## Kieran Dodds

b. 1980; lives in Edinburgh, Scotland

Notes——I would be a *Scots pine* (*Pinus sylvestris*), for me the quintessential highland species (even though its range extends to eastern Siberia). The Caledonian pine forests once blanketed Scotland but have been used to exhaustion, now only covering 1 percent of its original range in Scotland. The remnants attract native wild flora and fauna but also offer welcome respite for walkers in the driving wind and rain. Even on grim, misty days they provide colour and interest, like a floral tartan on the rocky landscape, emerald needles and rusty bark set against the purple heather understorey.



## Katie Paterson

b. 1981; lives in Berlin, Germany

Notes——The idea to grow trees to print books arose through making a connection between tree rings and chapters—almost as if the trees absorb the writer's words like air or water, and the rings become chapters, spaced out over the years to come. I wanted the *Future Library* forest to exist within a larger forest, becoming part of its ecosystem. We planted 1,000 *Adonewyan spruce* trees which in 100 years time should print at least 3,000 anthologies.

Excerpted from: Crystal Bennes, "Looking ahead: katie Paterson discusses her *Future Library*," *Apollo Magazine*, October 11, 2014.



## Ralph Eugene Meatyard

1925-1972

Notes——I want to get people to read stone, tree, so forth & so on through the construction of the picture, to lead them to these things exactly as if it were written out on a page. I think it can be done.

James Rhem, *Ralph Eugene Meatyard: The Family Album of Lucybelle Crater and Other Figurative Photography* (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2002), 40.



## Charles E. Burchfield

1893-1967

Notes——It seems at times I should be a composer of sounds, not only of rhythms and colors. Walking under the trees, I felt as if the color made sound.

Excerpted from: Charles Burchfield, *Charles Burchfield's Journals: The Poetry of Place* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992), 293.



## Corita Kent

1918–1986

Notes——I keep on looking at that *maple* tree outside. I moved to this place in October and the tree was in full leaf then. I watched it lose its leaves. I watched it covered with snow. Then these little green flowers came out and it didn't look like a maple tree at all. Finally the leaves were recognizable as maple leaves and that in a way is very much how I feel about my life. It seems a great new stage for me—whether it will ever be recognizable by anyone else I don't know, but I feel that great new things are happening very quietly inside of me. And I know these things have a way, like the maple tree, of finally bursting out in some form.

Editor's note: Corita's Boston apartment had a big bay window with a maple tree out front, and she liked to sit there and observe the tree changing throughout the seasons. Excerpted from: Pamela Rothorn, "A Conversation with Corita Kent," *The American Way*, November 1970, 7–14.