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**For Immediate Release.**

## **University of California, Santa Barbara MFA 2020 Cohort to Exhibit at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara**

Exhibition on View: Saturday, August 21 - Sunday, September 12, 2021

VIP and Member Reception: Saturday, August 21, 5-6 pm

Public Opening Reception: Saturday, August 21, 6-8 pm

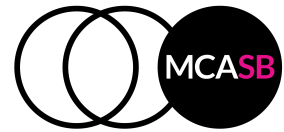


(Santa Barbara, CA) – Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is pleased to present the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Master of Fine Arts 2020 cohort exhibition *Unending*. On view from Saturday, August 21 through to Sunday, September 12, 2021 the exhibition features the work of Serene Blumenthal, Kio Griffith, Megan Koth, Marshall Sharpe, Thomas Stoeckinger, and David Wesley White, working across the mediums of sculpture, photography, installation, video, and painting.

**Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara**

653 Paseo Nuevo, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 | 805.966.5373 | [hello@mcasantabarbara.org](mailto:hello@mcasantabarbara.org) | [mcasantabarbara.org](http://mcasantabarbara.org)

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Originally intended as the culmination of their MFA degrees in the Summer of 2020, these artists take up the personal and cultural cycles of grief & transformation in order to congeal a new vision. *Unending* is a registration of the past broken by the present, allowing for deeper contemplation and immersion to take place. In the past year, the world has experienced a rare full-halt, allowing for reflection on just how intrinsic production & reproduction are to the demands of an earth-destroying capitalist paradigm and the entanglement of artists within this system. This exhibition showcases the collapse of time, tradition, and production, culminating in something more slowly realized and returned to.

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### About the Artists

**Serene Blumenthal** was born in Denver, Colorado. From a young age she was drawn to alternative education and the vibrant D.I.Y. community where exposure to underground music and culture inspired and drove her creativity. She received her B.F.A. from The Evergreen State College in 2012. She then spent several years exploring artistic interests through music, performance & film in Olympia & Los Angeles. She went on to achieve her MFA from UCSB in 2020 with a focus on visual art and performance.

Through video, performance & sculpture, Serene draws connections between the present and the past. Generating an aesthetic strata that holds multiple possibilities and obsolete histories all at once. Thinking about the space between, she creates objects and installations that approach an aggregation of feelings, gestures and materials; colliding language and chance operations. Her text based tapestries (including *Abundification/Desertification*, 2021) press language up against itself in a visual psychological puzzle. Her *Red Leather Fountain*, 2020 & *Leather Tent*, 2020 bring beauty to service and question the toxic luxurious post-capitalist environment at large. Her video *Trust Clinic*, 2021 is a mythological exploration of concepts of fertility, embodied trauma, whispers from the past & warped time.

**Kio Griffith** is an interdisciplinary artist working across graphic design, print-making, sculpture, sound, video, performance, assemblage, writings, and installation. Griffith has exhibited internationally in the UK, Japan, Germany, Croatia, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Turkey, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, and the U.S. Most notably are the 2016 Aichi Triennale in Nagoya, Japan, the 2017 Emerging Curator at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions), and exhibiting artist at Tokyo Arts And Space, Open Site 2018.

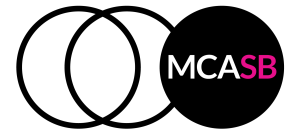
Relishing the materiality of found and appropriated objects, images, and sound infused with the cross-cultural history in which Kio Griffith perpetually dwells, he often mines his own richly complex family history for personal experiences which create insights into a broader geopolitical context even as they touch on modern-day issues of immigration and hyphenate identities.

Griffith's work is in private and museum collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He lives and works in both Los Angeles, California, and Tokyo, Japan.

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**Megan Koth** grew up in Cave Creek, Arizona. She attended Arizona State University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2014. In 2018, she moved to California to pursue a Master of Fine Arts at the UCSB, where she completed her degree in June of 2020. Her work resides in private collections throughout the US, and has appeared in Voyage-Phoenix, Lum Artzine, LA Weekly, Hyperallergic, and Phoenix New Times.

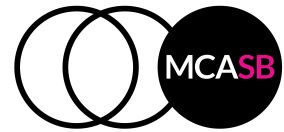
Through a decidedly queer, feminist lens, Koth addresses the often fraught relationship that can exist between the topography and interiority of the body. Viral internet imagery, contemporary makeup trends, and the traditions of painting and self-portraiture converge to address themes of body horror, obsessive self-evaluation and maintenance, and the liminal space of self-care. Drawing from her own experiences with chronic health issues, Koth interrogates how personal grooming in the form of skincare and beauty rituals can be a crucial exterior reaction to interior anxieties towards exerting, and sometimes losing, control over one's body and health.

**Marshall Sharpe**, b. 1988, is from Greensboro, NC. He received his BA in Art from Elon University in 2010. After teaching 8th Grade English in Hawaii for seven years, he was awarded a year-long sabbatical to move back to N.C. to pursue his research and painting full-time. In 2020, Sharpe graduated with an MFA from UCSB. He is currently an Instructor of Art at Utah Valley University. Sharpe has exhibited his work in a solo exhibition at UCSB's Glassbox Gallery and in group exhibitions at the Woodbury Museum, the Art, Design and Architecture Museum, California State University Channel Islands, California State University Long Beach, Elon University, the Honolulu Museum of Art School, the Salt Lake City Pride Story Garden, and Gallery 113 in Santa Barbara. His work has been featured in the Huffington Post, Lum Art Zine, the Santa Barbara Independent, Hawaii Public Radio, and the Salt Lake Tribune.

**Thomas Stoeckinger** is a lifelong resident of the Southern and Central California Coasts, who makes objects, performances, performative objects, and the occasional video. While working as a tradesperson and exhibiting work in Los Angeles, Thomas attended Santa Monica College before receiving a BFA from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2018 and completing an MFA at UCSB in the Spring of 2020.

Thomas has reflected on experiences as a professional landscaper, a fan of major league baseball, and a student of academic subjects (like art theory, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology) to inform a pragmatic approach of balancing the utility and contradictions of garden variety vocabularies and privileges with an adaptive awareness to changing meaning and circumstances. Projects that include flaccid baseball bats, or miniature sculptures of "The Jolly Green Giantess" babysitting a little man, illustrate attempts to facilitate ironic disruptions of current manifestation of a pastoral American dream and normative power dynamics. This guy seems pretty serious about not taking himself too seriously.

**David Wesley White** is a conceptual artist working across mediums. He was born and raised in Worcester County, Massachusetts before moving to New York City where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design in 2016. In 2020, David received his Master of Fine Arts from UCSB. His work has been exhibited in Massachusetts, New York City, and Southern California.



David approaches the material world from a revolutionary, queer perspective. He is guided by the existential plight of politics; finding nuggets of humor and beauty inside a continuum of frustration and fear. His finished works exist as sculptures, videos, performances, and paintings. David's process involves transforming practical objects to reveal hidden philosophies. His interventions and replications expose the fatal contradictions of a post-colonial, anthropocentric society. These criticisms play out against a backdrop of personal and American history; tracing and breaking through the edges of the established past.

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### About Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is a non-profit, non-collecting museum dedicated to the exhibition, education, and cultivation of the art of our time. Formerly Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF), MCASB is the premier venue for contemporary art between Los Angeles and San Francisco. MCASB is located at the Paseo Nuevo Upper Arts Terrace in downtown Santa Barbara, California.

### About University of California, Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience.

The Department of Art at UCSB is committed to a transdisciplinary approach to arts education. The arts are responsible for some of the most historically significant and enduring manifestations of culture. At UCSB, artists are provided with the necessary resources to develop their practice and contribute to the social fabric of their time.

For inquiries regarding UCSB MFA Art, please contact: Megan Koth, [megankoth@ucsb.edu](mailto:megankoth@ucsb.edu).