



REVIEWING ➤ 13

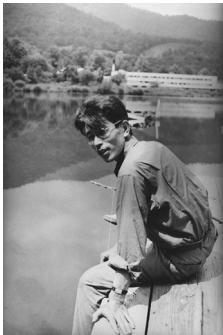
EXPLORING THE HISTORY + LEGACY OF
Black Mountain College

October 7 – 9, 2022

Three-day program filled with speakers, panels, workshops + performances held at University of North Carolina Asheville's Reuter Center and Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center

www.blackmountaincollege.org

Co-hosted by Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
and University of North Carolina Asheville



FROM LEFT: BMC Sunday Lunch, 1952. Gift of Marie T. Stilkind. Collection of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center. Mary Parks Washington, Leo Amino at BMC, Summer 1946. Western Regional Archives, State of North Carolina. *Black Mountain College Bulletin, Art Institute Summer 1946*. Collection of Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center. Anni Albers and Alex Reed, *Hardware Jewelry*, 1940-41, color photograph of original (chain, paper clips, drain strainer, bobby pins). Photograph by Tim Nighswander. Courtesy of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

**1:00 pm — Reuter Center Lobby — UNC Asheville
REGISTRATION | CHECK-IN BEGINS**

Ongoing throughout conference
Reuter Center Lobby
Sculptures by **Leigh Ann Hallberg**

2:00 – 3:30 pm
SESSION NO. 1 — Room 206
Moderator: **Michael Beggs**
Adobes and Ancient Threads: Josef and Anni Albers on Sabbatical, 1946-47
Michael Beggs: *The Albers on Sabbatical, September 1946 - January 1948*
Julie J. Thomson: *How the Harriett Engelhardt Collection Came to Be at BMC*

SESSION NO. 2 — Room 207
Moderator: **Carissa Pfeiffer**
Diane Ahn: *Displacing Space: Embedded Nature in Leo Amino's Plastic Sculptures*
Michael Hatch: *Black Craftspeople / Appalachian Histories*

PERFORMANCE — Manheimer Room
Ann Dunn and Dancers: *Seen/Unseen and Betty*, two dance works (30 minutes)

3:45 – 4:45 pm — Manheimer Room

WELCOME — Jeff Arnal (Executive Director, BMCM+AC) and **Nancy Cable** (Chancellor, UNC Asheville)

INTRODUCTION — Dave Peifer (BMCM+AC Board Member)

KEYNOTE — Marci Kwon
A scholar of American Art, Marci Kwon's research and teaching interests include the intersection of fine art and vernacular practice, theories of modernism, cultural exchange between Asia and the Americas, critical race theory, and "folk" and "self-taught" art. She is the co-director of the Cantor Arts Center's Asian American Art Initiative. Her book *Enchantments: Joseph Cornell and American Modernism* was published by Princeton University Press in 2021. Additional articles address Isamu Noguchi; John Kane and amateurism, and labor; race and value; Japanese internment crafts; Surrealism and folk art at the Museum of Modern Art; Martin Wong and Orientalism; and Asian American art. She is currently working on a book about art, artifice, and authenticity in post-Earthquake San Francisco Chinatown. Kwon has also held positions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. At Stanford, Kwon is a faculty affiliate of the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Asian American Studies, African and African American Studies, American Studies, the Center for East Asia, and Feminist and Gender Studies, and serves on the steering committee of Modern Thought and Literature.

7:00 – 9:00 pm OPENING
Leo Amino: Work with Material
Back Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
120 College Street, downtown Asheville

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

8:00 – 9:00 am — Reuter Center Lobby — UNC Asheville
MEET + GREET

9:00 – 10:30 am
SESSION NO. 1 — Room 205
Moderator: **Kate Anderson**

Angel Bellaran: *Theory of Excellence: The Unknown Legacy of Diversity at Black Mountain College*

EunJung Chang: *Race and Art Education: Representing the Critical Issues of Social Justice in the Art of Jacob Lawrence*

Sophie Mak-Schram: *Finding Stone Williams with the Watermelon Woman*

SESSION NO. 2 — Room 206

Moderator: **Heather South**

Sarah Ehlers: *Black Mountain Poetic Communities and the "Paradox of Institutionalality"*

Tom Frank: *Black Mountain College and the '60s Generation of "Experimental" Colleges*

David Silver: *The Last Few Days of Black Mountain College*

SESSION NO. 3 — Room 207

Charles Olson Outside of the Western Box: In Search of the Primary, Session 1

Moderator: **Joseph Pizza**

Jeffrey Gardiner: *The Informing Body: Olson's The Chiasma, or Lectures on the New Sciences of Man (1953)*

Joshua Hoeynck: *OVER ALL, HATE: Empire and Tragedy in Charles Olson's The Mayan Letters*

Ben Lee: *Black Mountain Dispersal II*

PERFORMANCE — Room 120

Melissa Godoy Nieto: *Refractive Projections* (40 minutes)

PERFORMANCE — Manheimer Room

Lei Han and UNCA New Media Students: *Phantom Perspectives* (60 minutes)

10:45 am – 12:15 pm

SESSION NO. 1 — Room 206

Moderator: **Curt Cloninger**

Charlott Greub: *The Concept of Silence in Music and Architecture Exemplified by John Cage's 4'33" and the Farnsworth House by Mies van der Rohe*

Dave Peifer: *In Search of Peter Nemenyi, a Black Mountain College Science Student*

SESSION NO. 2 — Room 207

Moderator: **Elliot Inman**

Isabel Bird: *Ruth Asawa's Stamp and the Imprint of Black Mountain College*

Shana Dumont Garr: *Picture Planes and Glyph Exchange: Feminist Offerings Fueled by Spaces Between*

Brian T. Leahy: *Ray Johnson's Relational Abstraction*

WORKSHOP — Room 230

Anne Dickens and Craig Bogdon: *Materials and Meaning: Jewelry Making in the Style of Anni Albers and Alex Reed*

PERFORMANCES — Manheimer Room

Madeline Shuron: *Who Are You Who Are So Strangely Me?* A postmodern duet for two (20 minutes)

Weronika Trojanska with Composers (in order of appearance): shan-uh-kees, Luis Guita, Chelidon Frame, Timothy Reed, Wayne de Fehr, Animaes Noctis, Roland Kuit, Eileen Mc Loughlin, Kristaps Freimanis, and **Sylwia Górkak:** *Untitled* (Leo Amino) (15 minutes)

12:15 – 1:15 pm

CATERED LUNCH

1:15 – 2:00 pm — Manheimer Room

INTRODUCTION — **Curt Cloninger** (BMCM+AC Board Member)

FEATURED SPEAKER — **Genji Amino**

Amino is a poet, critic, art historian, and curator. They are the Director of the Estate of Leo Amino, grandchild of Leo Amino, and Co-Director of New Mexico Poetics, an annual residency and seminar founded with Daisy Atterbury in 2010. Amino is a PhD candidate in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, and holds an MFA from the Milton Avery School of the Arts, Bard College. Their work focuses on how Asian American and African American racialized histories and trauma play out in the present day and generate visions for the future. Their recent curatorial projects that connect to this project include *Leo Amino: The Visible and the Invisible* at David Zwirner Gallery and *No Monument: In the Wake of the Japanese American Incarceration* at the Noguchi Museum.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8 (CONTINUED)

2:15 – 3:45 pm

SESSION NO. 1 — Room 206

Something New, Something Unknown:

The Experimental Processes and Materials of Women Artists at Black Mountain College

Moderator: **Siu Challons-Lipton**

Astrid Bridgwood: *M.C. Richards:*

Exploring the Synthesis of Poetry to Pottery

Siu Challons-Lipton: *Anni Albers:*

Exploring the Material, Exploring Life

Katie Pittman: *Women of the Woods*

SESSION NO. 2 — Room 207

Charles Olson Outside of the Western Box:

In Search of the Primary, Session 2

Moderator: **Jeffrey Gardiner**

Jeff Davis: *Olson's Guides to Paradise*

Gary Grieve-Carlson: *"that fantastic condition of the human race when everything mattered"*

Joseph Pizza: *Olson, Oppenheimer, and "Black Mountain North"*

WORKSHOP — Room 230

Katherine Agard: *a churning sea, a black mountain, a mirrored glass: reflecting on lineage, inheritance, time and refuge across political and personal disturbance* (60-75 minutes)

PERFORMANCES — Manheimer Room

Casey Edwards: *Exploring the Merrill Gillespie Collection: A Brief Overview and Lecture Recital of the Manuscripts*

Contained Therein (45 minutes)

4:00 – 5:30 pm

SESSION NO. 1 — Room 206

Moderator: **Angel Bellaran**

William W. Graham: *A Voice from the Margin: An Exploration of Boundaries and Art*

Simon Packard: *Ice, Offal: Why Ask a Photographer to Draw? The Packard Process*

Mark Small: *Wallen and Penn — Setting the Stage for the Demise of BMC*

SESSION NO. 2 — Room 207

Moderator: **Sarah Ehlers**

Matt Garite: *From Black Mountain to White Hand: Olson on Peyote*

Elliot Iman: *From Digitization to Discovery: Applying Data Science to the Art of John Cage, Stan VanDerBeek, and Anni Albers*

PERFORMANCE — Room 120

Paul Bright: *Ferromusica, and a consideration of sound collage, decollage and composition* (45 minutes)

WORKSHOP — Room 230

Laura Mullen and **Lee Ann Brown:** *Into the Light: Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop Based on the Work of Leo Amino*

PERFORMANCE — Reuter Center Patio

Ted, Laura, Nicholas, and Dylan Pope:
GARDEN FOR LEO AMINO

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

9:00 – 10:00 am — COFFEE + CONVERSATION

BMC Museum + Arts Center

120 College Street, downtown Asheville

10:00 am — DEPART FOR LAKE EDEN CAMPUS TOUR

Carpools depart from BMCM+AC for Black Mountain College's Lake Eden Campus Tour led by

Julie J. Thomson and **David Silver** — \$15 per person

In order to continue offering our annual Black Mountain College Lake Eden Campus Tour, we have instated mandatory carpooling. Please arrive at BMCM+AC at 120 College Street for Coffee + Conversation between 9am – 10am to pick up your parking pass and follow us to designated tour parking.



Fernando and Alejandro Leon at BMC. Collection of BMC Museum + Arts Center.

PRESENTERS

Katherine Agyemaa Agard is a Trinidadian writer currently based in San Francisco. Her first book, *of colour*, was long listed for the 2021 Bocas Award in Caribbean Literature.

Diane Ahn is a PhD student in History, Theory, and Criticism of Art at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Her research is centered on modern and contemporary Asian and diasporic Asian art. Her writings can be found in publications such as *Art in America* and *artforum.com*.

Michael Beggs is an architect and independent scholar who has studied Black Mountain College since 2010. He worked from 2010-2015 at the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation and has written about Josef Albers for a number of publications including *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-57* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015) and *Josef Albers* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2018).

Angel Bellaran is a curator, visual activist, and educator with over 15 years of experience in the art world. She received her MA in Curatorial Studies from the Institute of Art, Design & Technology in Dublin, Ireland. A third-generation multiracial American, Bellaran's research explores the impact of forgotten and/or erased histories by identifying and analyzing the unknown; her practice is intersectional and often collaborative, and her work challenges conventional wisdoms by inspiring cultural change from within.

David Berger, pianist, holds music degrees from Ohio State University and the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He conducted professional opera for 20 years, and has served as accompanist/coach/chorusmaster for many opera companies. He teaches piano and voice privately, has taught K-college music and currently resides in Greenville, SC.

Isabel Bird is a PhD Candidate in History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University and the 2022-2023 Menil Drawing Institute Pre-Doctoral Fellow.

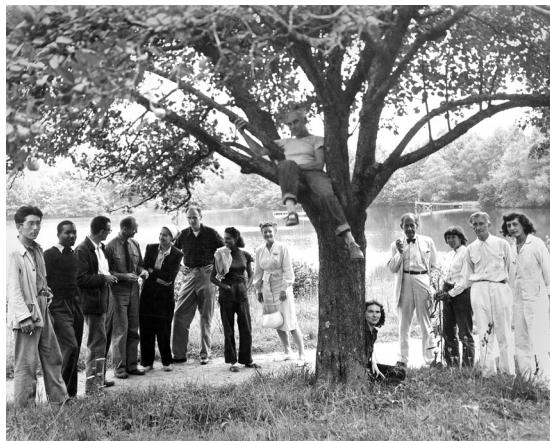
Craig Bogdon is a former IT Manager and independent art researcher and collector.

Astrid Bridgwood is a Junior at Queens University studying Art History, Arts Leadership and Administration, and Philosophy. A 2022 Inducted Noble Fellow, a Queens University of Charlotte Davies Fellow, and a Queens Civic Engagement Fellow, she is currently researching Buckminster Fuller's ideas about liberal arts education at Black Mountain College and beyond.

Paul Bright is the Director of Art Galleries and Collections at Wake Forest University. Following a concentration in printmaking, he adopted collage as an approach and employs it across mediums. His professional history includes exhibitions, projects, residencies and collections in the US and internationally. Bright maintains an active parallel life as an arts professional in art and history museums, galleries, as a graphic designer, exhibition designer, and curator.

Lee Ann Brown, Judith E. Wilson Poetry Fellow, teaches poetry at St. John's University in Queens, NYC, edits the independent Tender Buttons Press, and co-creates poetry happenings. In her many works, including her recent publication *The Other Archer*, she uses collage methods and song forms.

Siu Challons-Lipton is Executive Director of the Department of Art, Design, and Music and Professor of Art History at Queens University, where she created a class on Black Mountain College. Her research, which spans numerous presentations, articles, and a co-edited book, focuses on the value of the arts as experienced at the college.



Photographer unknown, 1946 Black Mountain College Summer Institute Faculty and Spouses, August 1946. Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

JunJung Chang is Professor of Art Education in the Department of Fine Arts at Francis Marion University. She holds an MS in Art Education and a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana University, Bloomington. Her research interests include museum education, STEM/STEAM education, cross-cultural education, and social justice art education.

Jeff Davis has hosted the weekly radio program "Wordplay" since 2005, currently heard on AshevilleFM.org and WSFM, 103.3. His poetry has been published in the *Asheville Poetry Review*, the *Nantahala Review*, *Kakalak*, *Iodine*, and other print and online journals. His *NatureS: Selected Poems, 1972-2005*, was published in 2006. Another manuscript awaits publication.

Anne Dickens is a former high school art instructor with a lifelong interest in the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College.

Anna Dunn served as principal ballerina with The Hartford Ballet and The American Ballet after training with the New York City Ballet, Martha Graham, and Merce Cunningham. She owns The Asheville Academy of Ballet and Contemporary Dance and teaches courses in the Arts and Humanities at UNC Asheville. She has published three volumes of poetry and received multiple teaching awards, including Most Distinguished Teacher in Humanities at UNC Asheville.

Casey Edwards, MM, MLIS, is an interdisciplinary academic who specializes in vocal music and archival materials. During an internship at BMCM+AC, he focused his practicum project on a collection analysis of the sheet music existing at the facility. As a performer, he focuses on the tenorino repertoire. He currently serves as a board member for the Asheville Gay Men's Chorus.

Sarah Ehlers is Associate Professor of English at the University of Houston and is working on a study of Black Mountain College tentatively titled "Black Mountain Modernity." Her first book, *Left of Poetry: Depression America and the Formation of Modern Poetics* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), was shortlisted for the Modernist Studies Association First Book Prize.

Thomas Edward Frank is a scholar of higher education and religious institutions. He is co-editor of the *Journal of Black Mountain College Studies* and is curating an exhibition of works by Black Mountain College artists from the Wake Forest University and Reynolda House Museum of American Art collections to be shown in 2023.

Jeff Gardiner is a regular presenter on Charles Olson's work at the ReVIEWING BMC Conference. In addition to his dissertation, he has published many essays on Olson's poetry and serves as co-host of the Olson panels at the American Literature Association Annual Conference.

Matt Garite is a Professor of English at Wake Forest University, specializing in the study of 20th and 21st century American literature, with an emphasis on the literature of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture.

Shana Dumont Garr is a contemporary art curator, writer, and educator based in Greater Boston. She was the curator of Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, MA from 2016-2022. Previously she served as the director of Kingston Gallery in Boston, the director of exhibitions and programs at Artspace in Raleigh, NC, and worked at the Ackland Art Museum in Chapel Hill, NC. She is currently pursuing a doctorate at the Institute of Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts.

William W. Graham From being raised on the campus of a seminary to fugitive to nearly three decades in prison, William Grahams' life has taken him across many boundaries and from the mainstream to the margin. While incarcerated, he became a self taught artist and taught art to other prisoners.

Charlott Greub is an artist, architect, urban designer, and Associate Professor of Architecture at North Dakota State University in Fargo. Her work has been exhibited in many fine art museums across Germany. She holds an MFA in Sculpture and an MA in Architecture from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany.

Gary Grieve-Carlson was a Fulbright Junior Lecturer in the Federal Republic of Germany and is now a Professor of English at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA. He is the author of *Poems Containing History: 20th-Century American Poetry's Engagement with the Past* and the editor of *Olson's Prose*. His essays have appeared in many US and international literary journals.

Leigh Ann Hallberg is an artist and Teaching Professor in Art at Wake Forest University, where she has twice received a Hoak Family Fellowship as well as a Christina W. Whitney Art Faculty Grant, a Dingledine Faculty Grant for Support of International Activities and three Archie Grants. Her work has been exhibited throughout the US and internationally. Hallberg received her MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She teaches drawing and studio fundamentals at Wake Forest.

Lei Han is a Professor and former Chair of the New Media Department at UNC Asheville. She received her BA from Shenzhen University in China and her MFA from the Memphis College of Art and Design. Her work in experimental video, animation, and interactive art is often inspired by nature and everyday life and explores notions of perception, memory, transience, and time.

Michael Hatch, founder of Crucible Glassworks Studio and Gallery, is a glass artist, musician, craft-based researcher, and sound/video artist whose work has been exhibited at museums throughout the country. He received a BS in Sociology and Anthropology from Virginia Commonwealth University and an MA in Critical Craft Studies from Warren Wilson College. His current research project, *Black Craftspeople: Appalachian Histories*, is supported through a Craft Research Project Grant from the Center For Craft.

Joshua Hoeynck has been studying and writing on Charles Olson and Black Mountain poetry since receiving his PhD at Washington University in St. Louis. In 2019, he published *Staying Open: Charles Olson's Sources and Influences* (Vernon Press), a collection of essays from events sponsored by the Charles Olson Society, which he co-directs with Jeff Gardiner. He teaches at Case Western Reserve University.

Elliot Inman holds a BA in English from NC State University and a PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Kentucky. He works at a software company implementing machine learning and data visualization research and also leads workshops in electronics, musical experimentation, and creative coding.

Brain T. Leahy earned his MA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is a PhD candidate in the Department of Art History at Northwestern University. His dissertation investigates the role of supplementary exhibition media, such as press releases and announcements, in the development of art-historical narratives during the 1970s and 1980s. His writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in Print*, *The Art Newspaper*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*, in addition to various museum catalogs, including *Ray Johnson C/O* (Art Institute of Chicago, 2021).

Benjamin Lee is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he teaches modern and contemporary poetry, literary theory, and African American literature. He is the author of *Poetics of Emergence: Affect and History in Postwar Experimental Poetry* (University of Iowa Press, 2020) and numerous essays and reviews. He is writing a second book on dispersed avant-garde communities.

Sophie Mak-Schram is working on a PhD as part of the EU: Horizon 2020-funded FEINART project. She has a Research MA in Arts and Culture from Leiden University, a PgC in Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy from the University of Leeds, and a BA in English Literature and History of Art from the University of York. She thinks and works collaboratively on how knowledge is constituted around art — and what political and social implications these knowledges have. She is interested in decolonial and feminist approaches, radical pedagogies, and collective practice.

Laura Mullen is the author of eight books; recognition for her poetry includes a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Rona Jaffe Award. Recent poems have appeared in *Fence*, *Together in a Sudden Strangeness*, and *Bettering American Poetry*. Her translation of Veronique Pittolo's *Hero* was published by Black Square Editions, and her translation of work by Stephanie Chaillou has just appeared in *Interim*. A collection of poems is forthcoming from Solid Objects Press in 2023.

Melissa Godoy Nieto is based in NYC who also spends time in Mexico and on artist-residencies around the world. She works in drawing, painting, textile, analog projections and performance and has been exhibited in New York, Mexico, France, and Spain. Her work explores themes of the subconscious, adaptation, and the natural world.

Simon Packard is Academic Course Leader and Senior Lecturer for integrated Foundation Year at University of Gloucestershire, UK and Tutor in Fine Art and Drawing for 30 years. He is a designer of drawing spaces where inter-discipline learning is encouraged. His on-going PhD examines the role of expanded drawing projects and bespoke learning spaces on student employment and making 4 years after college. Black Mountain College underpins the projects within the research project.



FROM LEFT: Photographer Unknown, Community gathering to announce the closing of the college, 1956. August 1946. Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina. Andy Oates, Dancers in the Dining Hall, no date.



David Peifer is a professor of mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. His mathematical research is in topology. He became interested in BMC when he learned that Max Dehn, a famous German mathematician (who had done foundational work in topology), had taught at BMC. Since that time, Peifer's research has included writing about BMC. He has been a member of the board of the BMC Museum + Arts Center for over a decade.

Katie Pittman is a Junior at Queens University studying Art History, Arts Leadership and Administration, and Interfaith Studies. She is VP of Events and Programming in the Alpha Omicron chapter of Kappa Delta, part of the Interfaith Leadership Council, member of National History Society Phi Alpha Theta, and Resident Assistant for freshmen students living in the Hayes Honors Community.

Joseph Pizza is an Associate Professor of English at Belmont Abbey College, where he has taught courses in Modern and Contemporary Poetry, African American Studies, and Writing and Rhetoric. He is the author of the forthcoming monograph *Dissonant Voices: Race, Jazz, and Innovative Poetics in Midcentury America* and has recently published work on Jayne Cortez, T.S. Eliot, Nathaniel Mackey, and Diane di Prima.

Dylan Pope was fine with subtitles in films by age 5.

Laura Pope is a classically trained musician with a degree and experience in Music Therapy.

Ted Pope, whose life began on a Strategic Air Command base, was not at all surprised by the absurdity of Dr. Strangelove when he saw the famous Kubrick film as a teen. A performance poet and artist whose work is influenced by his unique family history and experiences, he is the self-described "Warm and Fuzzy Wall between Church and State." His works include *Varve* (2013), *rEdlipstick* (2005), and *Jousting from the Back of a Mule* (2020).

Saint Nicholas Archer Pope is a Saint, musician, and artist. He will be making his contribution online from Spain.

Madeline Shuron studied theater at Bryn Mawr College and is an MFA candidate in Dance at Temple University. As an artist and educator in Philadelphia, she is interested in investigating embodied affect and interrogating the audience-performer relationship through an interdisciplinary approach of dance, theater, film, puppetry, and clowning.

David Silver is an associate professor of environmental studies and urban agriculture at the University of San Francisco and author of the forthcoming book *The Farm at Black Mountain College*.

Mark Small grew up being apprenticed to Vincent Price and Danny Thomas in a theater outside Detroit and has lived in the Asheville region for over 30 years after summering here all his life. A retired wilderness instructor, camp and conference director, religious educator, teacher of academically gifted children, and Presbyterian Church minister, Mark has traveled widely serving indigenous peoples living in California's Trinity River valley and Tingian villages in Northern Luzon, the Philippines.

Julie J. Thomson is an independent scholar and curator who researches and writes about artists at Black Mountain College. She served as co-editor of the *Journal of Black Mountain College Studies* from 2018-2020. In 2016 she curated *Begin to See: The Photographers of Black Mountain College*. She also edited *That Was the Answer: Interviews with Ray Johnson* (Soberscove Press 2018).

Weronika Trojánska is a Polish artist who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań and Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam. Her works and performances, including the historic "Cut Piece" by Yoko Ono, have been presented at museums around the world. She has also published texts in many Polish and English-language magazines about art (including *On Curating*, *Metropolis M*, and *Arterritory.com*). She is now a PhD student at The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wroclaw.

Leo Amino

WORK WITH MATERIAL

Curated by Genji Amino, Director of The Estate of Leo Amino

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 – JANUARY 7, 2023



Japanese American sculptor Leo Amino (1911-1989) is the first artist in the United States to utilize plastics as a principal material, the innovator of cast plastics in American sculpture, and after Isamu Noguchi the most represented artist of color in the history of the Whitney Museum of American Art's annual exhibitions for sculpture. He is one among a select few Asian American artists to have gained this level of national exposure in the first half of the 20th century. Invited by Josef Albers to join the faculty of Black Mountain College in 1946, a year after the artist began his experiments with polyester and acrylic following their military declassification at the close of WWII, Amino is the only sculptor in the following two decades to use this new industrial medium to produce a full body of work carrying forward the innovations of Constructivism and the Bauhaus with respect to both material and phenomenal transparency. Joining artists Noguchi, Yasuo Kuniyoshi and others in denouncing fascism in Japan and attempting to carve out a space for their work on the East Coast during the era of Japanese American incarceration in the United States, Amino represents what historian Mae Ngai might call an "impossible subject" of the history of American sculpture.

During a period in which the dominant strain of the American avant-garde sought out the immediacy of authentic gesture and automatic revelation, Amino chose to pursue an investigation into radical mediation, seeking to capture the intimacy between the act of seeing and the thing seen. Often embracing a minor or miniature scale, high degree of finish, refinement of form, and sensuous address disavowed by the heroic existentialism prevalent among Abstract Expressionists, Amino's embrace of light and color as primary elements of sculptural construction anticipated the concerns of the next generation's Minimalist and Light and Space movements, whose artists would take up his medium of choice two decades later. Across a breadth of media and compositional approaches often remarked during the artist's lifetime for its inventiveness and versatility, Amino's oeuvre brings into focus the dynamics of perception, articulating space, light, and color through an optics of encounter, interpenetration, and absorption.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FOUNDATION, BUSINESS, + INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS



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Council
Fifty years
of leadership



ABOVE: Leo Amino, *Untitled*, 1954, hand-carved mahogany, steel wire, 40 x 5 3/4 x 5 1/2 inches. Collection of David Feldman and Jennifer Herman Feldman.

FRONT COVER: Beaumont Newhall, *Leo Amino at BMC with his sculpture Anticipant*, Summer 1946. Western Regional Archives, State of North Carolina.

BMCM+AC Board of Directors, UNC Asheville Office of the Chancellor, Estate of Leo Amino, Davis Dauray Family Fund, David Feldman and Jennifer Herman Feldman, Henry Moore Foundation, Wythe Foundation, Lake Eden Preserve, Lake Eden Events, Catherine Frank, Michael Manes and Blue Spiral 1, and Susan Rhew Design.

