



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

For Immediate Release

HIGH TOUCH

John Michael Kohler Arts Center

**Presents six artists who transform the virtual into the physical
March 21, 2021–March 13, 2022**

Online exhibition opens April 9



SHEBOYGAN, WI—*High Touch*, an exhibition of new work by six artists who look at technology through a human lens, will be on view at the [John Michael Kohler Arts Center](#) from March 21, 2021 through March 13, 2022. An online exhibition will be available on April 9.

Nearly forty years ago, futurist John Naisbitt coined the term “high touch” in his 1982 book, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*. He defined it as humankind’s counterbalancing response to the impersonal nature of technology, or high tech.

Naisbitt claimed that the appropriate reaction to more technology is not to stop it, but to accommodate it, respond to it, and shape it.

The artists in *High Touch* – Danielle Andress, Conrad Bakker, E. Winslow Funaki, Diana Guerrero-Maciá, Melissa Pokorny, and Jade Yumang – embrace technology as a medium and tool to research, ideate, and assemble their intensely handcrafted, resolutely analog artworks.

Whether sourcing images from the internet's endless scroll or using digital processes to fabricate components of their works, they create highly tangible objects that transform the virtual into the physical.

"In our hyper-mediated, screen-based existence, when true presence is often elusive, real-world encounters with artworks provide an antidote to the flattened experience of digital life," notes Kaytie Johnson, senior curator, John Michael Kohler Arts Center. "Situated where craft and technology intersect, where materials end and sensation begins, *High Touch* reminds us of the radical, transformative power of art, and of art's ability to touch us."

The array of works in the exhibition are also unified by their ability to elicit a haptic response in the viewer—a palpable, tactile sense of perception that engages senses beyond the optic. They elicit a range of visceral and psychological responses that are triggered by closeness and proximity, and provide the immediate experience of texture, scale, and mass that is possible only in person. High touch art invokes the body through spatial nearness, asserts its physicality, and evokes emotion. It invites us to recover and hone our senses—to see more, to hear more, to feel more.

ARTISTS BIOS

Danielle Andress produces nonfunctional weavings that investigate our relationships with consumable images and objects, and the irregularities of language in art in the digital age. She earned a BFA in textiles from Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA in studio practice from California College of the Arts. Andress's work has been exhibited at SPACES, Cleveland, Ohio; Anchorage Museum, Alaska; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, California; and Southern Exposure, San Francisco. Andress is a cofounder and active member of Borderline Art Collective, San Francisco. She is an assistant professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the Department of Fiber and Materials Studies, where she teaches hand and digital weaving. She lives and works in Chicago.

Conrad Bakker makes carved and painted wood sculptures and paintings of everyday objects that critically comment on the political economies and relational networks between people and things. He holds a BFA from Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and an MFA from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Bakker's work has been exhibited internationally at venues including Tate Modern, London; the New Museum, New York; the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago; Art in General, New York; and Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. His work has been featured in *Frieze*, *Flash Art*, *Artforum*, *Art Papers*, *Sculpture*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker*. Bakker is professor of studio arts in the School of Art + Design at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He lives and works in Urbana, Illinois.

E. Winslow Funaki works in sculpture, video, performance, and furniture design to explore identity, defy easy categorization, and challenge the line between art and design. She earned a BFA in painting and MFA in furniture design from Rhode Island School of Design. Her work has been exhibited at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts; the Museum of Art at Rhode Island School of Design; Special, New York; Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, New York. Funaki has been a resident artist at Shiro Oni, Onishi, Fujioka, Japan, and was awarded a fellowship at Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency, Saugatuck, Michigan. She lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island.

Diana Guerrero-Maciá creates collage-based hybrid paintings that allude to cultural references including the sampling of databases, the structural forms of modernism, and the pictorial space of medieval art. She earned a BFA from Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania, and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield, Michigan. Guerrero-Maciá has exhibited widely at venues including Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California; Artpace, San Antonio, Texas; and The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Missouri. She is professor of art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the Department of Fiber and Material Studies Department and is represented by Traywick Contemporary, Berkeley, California, and Carrie Secrist Gallery, Chicago. She lives and works in Chicago.

Melissa Pokorny creates sculptural works that question ways of knowing the world and illuminate the invisible, intangible, and knotty attachments between temporal, geographical, and material things. She earned a BFA from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and an MFA from University of California, Davis. Her work has been exhibited at venues throughout the United States, including Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco; Southern Exposure, San Francisco; New Langton Arts, San Francisco; Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois, Chicago; and the Richard E. Peeler Art Center, Greencastle, Indiana. Pokorny is a professor of painting and sculpture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she also serves as the executive associate director of the School of Art and Design. Pokorny lives and works in Urbana, Illinois.

Jade Yumang focuses on the concept of queer form through sculptural abstraction, installation, and performance. Yumang received an MFA from Parsons School of Design and a BFA from The University of British Columbia. His work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum; the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa; Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, Kansas; and BronxArtSpace, the Bronx, New York. Yumang is part of the New York-based collaborative duo Tatlo, with Sara Jimenez, and is assistant professor in the Department of Fiber and Material Studies at School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He lives and works in Chicago.

ABOUT THE JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center located north of Milwaukee in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was founded in 1967. It is dedicated to making innovative arts programming accessible to a broad audience that ranges from artists and academics to families and youth of all ages. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts programs, and community arts initiatives. Since the 1970s, JMKAC has preserved, studied, and exhibited works by art-environment builders and has earned a worldwide reputation for its work in this area. Artist-built environments involve an individual significantly transforming their surroundings—for example, their home or yard—into an exceptional, multifaceted work of art.

The Arts Center's downtown Sheboygan facility includes eight galleries, two performance spaces, a café, a retail shop, and a drop-in art-making studio. Among its program offerings are community arts projects; artist residencies; presentations of dance, film, and music; a free weekly summer concert series; classes and workshops; an onsite arts-based preschool program; and approximately twelve originally curated exhibitions of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists annually. The John Michael Kohler Arts Center also administers the renowned Arts/Industry residency program, which is hosted by Kohler Co.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI. Admission is always free. For information, call 920.458.6144, or visit jmkac.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#)

THE ART PRESERVE, OPENING IN JUNE 2021

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center's Art Preserve will open in June of 2021. The Art Preserve will be the world's first museum to focus entirely on work from art environments. Visitors will have unprecedented access and insight into the display, preservation, conservation, and interpretation of the Arts Center's premier collection through tableaux as well as a unique system of curated, visible storage of the works of art. The Art Preserve is located at 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI 53081. For more information, visit artpreserve.org. Admission is always free.

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Image: E. Winslow Funaki, Untitled, 2020; digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.