



Donald R. and Joan F. Beall
Center for Art + Technology
University of California, Irvine

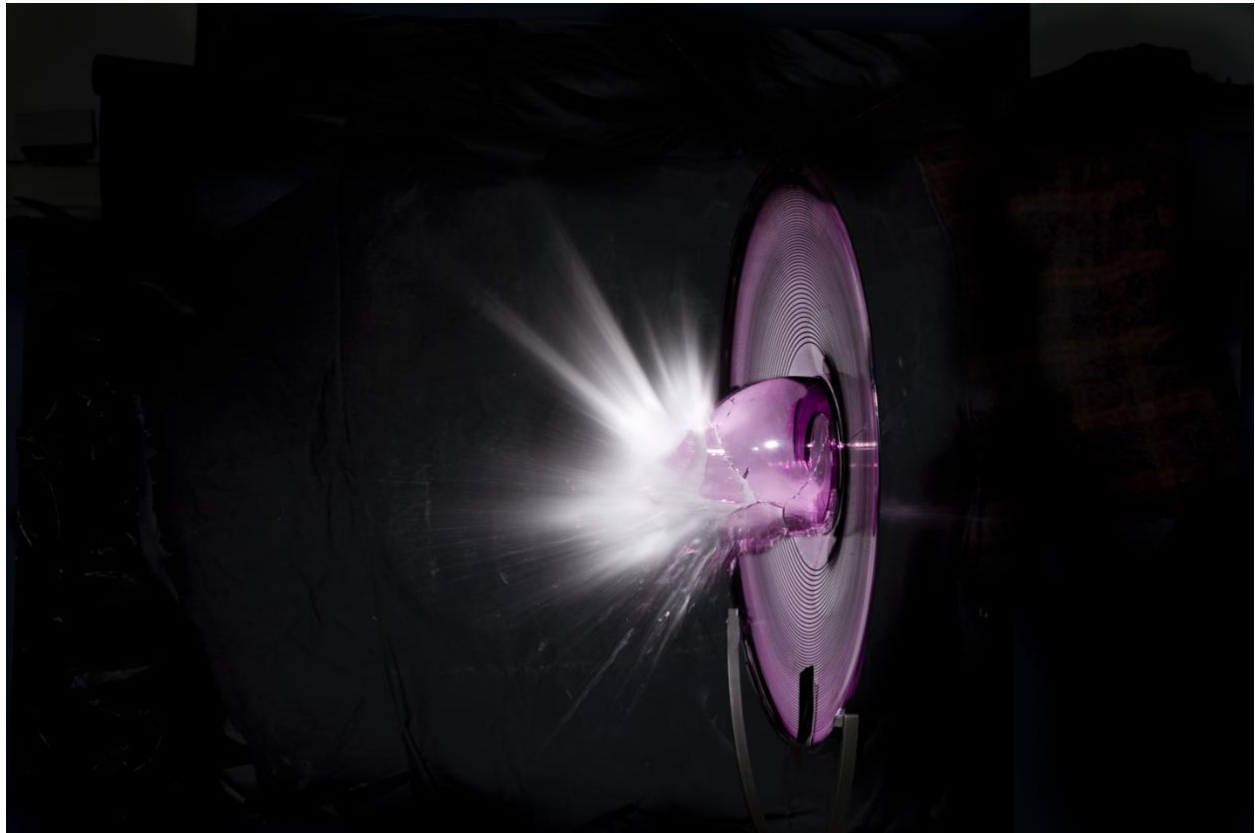
University of California, Irvine
Claire Trevor School of the Arts

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PRESS RELEASE

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, noon-6 p.m.

Engaging the Margins Curated by Antoinette LaFarge and Jesse Colin Jackson



On View: January 25 to April 19, 2025

IRVINE, Calif., January 7, 2025 — The Beall Center for Art + Technology at the University of California, Irvine, is pleased to announce the opening of *Engaging the Margins*, curated by Antoinette LaFarge and Jesse Colin Jackson. The exhibition opens on Saturday, January 25, 2025, and will run through Saturday, April 19, 2025.

Engaging the Margins presents the work of contemporary artists committed to experimenting in the marginal areas where artmaking, practice-based research, and scholarship intersect. Some selected artists stage their work in laboratory settings, some in studios, and some in wild or abandoned landscapes, but all interrogate how art is positioned in a culture that continues to marginalize artists working across disciplinary boundaries. These eight artists bring scientific and technical fields such as

bioscience, computation, engineering, and anthropology into direct conversation with artmaking. In doing so, they raise tough and pertinent questions: How might experimental and lab-based practices differ from other forms of knowledge-building or artmaking? How might such lab-based practices demand a different approach to aesthetics? How do the ethics of social engagement at the heart of this work shift how the art finds its final form?

The selected artists are featured in Jackson and LaFarge's anthology *Experimental Practices in Interdisciplinary Art: Engaging the Margins* (Brill, 2024), launching alongside the exhibition. They include Ava Aviva Avnisan, Rebecca Cummins, Krista-Leigh Davis, Yvette Granata & Alina Nazmeeva, Catherine Griffiths, Nina Vroemen, Jennifer Willet, and Jiayi Young. The works utilize technologies such as lidar imaging, archaic optical systems, data modeling, AI and virtual worlds, focusing on glacial ice, fungal life, nuclear waste, genetics and settler colonialism.

“The history of the last hundred years shows how artists have been experimental in every possible way to engage with their culture,” noted curator Antoinette LaFarge. “But each generation has its own special flavors of experimentation. We wanted to show how exciting it is that some contemporary artists are articulating forms of experimentation in harness with the sciences. These interdisciplinary artists are canaries in the coal mine of cultural change — they bring us a version of what's happening to our world, with insights about what might happen next.”

In Rebecca Cummins' *Shooting Stars* series, the works pay homage to the pioneering work of Harold Edgerton, who worked with high-speed stroboscopic photography as early as the 1930s. In Cummins's series, glass artworks are shown being shattered, highlighting the way that creation and destruction are intertwined in experimental work. Cummins herself defines “experimental” as “where the challenge is.” Similarly playful, though in an entirely different medium, is the performance video project *No Claim to the Blue-Green Bloom* by Krista-Leigh Davis, in which life-size ‘microbes’ venture into the wilderness. Davis sees her project as “a microbial metaphor for capitalism, colonialism, and the patriarchy, the things that structure the way we live,” offering a way to reflect on adaptation in a toxic environment.

“One of the magical things about being an artist invested in sciences and technologies as they change is that you're part of a small number of people asking the vital questions,” shared curator Jesse Colin Jackson. What are the implications? How can we intervene? What are the unanticipated consequences?”

Engaging the Margins will be on view from Saturday, January 25, 2025, through Saturday, April 19, 2025. The opening reception will take place on Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. The Beall Center is free admission and open to the public during the academic year, Tuesday–Saturday from noon–6 pm.

Engaging the Margins is supported by The Beall Family Foundation and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

Photo credit: Rebecca Cummins, *Shooting Stars: Benjamin Moore*, 2007.

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About Artist/Curator

Antoinette LaFarge is an artist and writer with a particular interest in mythmaking and contested histories. Her books include *Sting in the Tale: Art, Hoax and Provocation* (2021) and *Louise Brigham and the Early History of Sustainable Furniture Design* (2019). Her most recent art projects, *Deep Water* (2023) and *Deep Earth* (2021), explore our neglected relationship with subsurface geography. She is Professor Emerita of Digital Media at UC Irvine. Her website is

<http://www.antoinettelafarge.com>

Jesse Colin Jackson is a Canadian artist and designer based in Southern California. He explores the architectures we construct—from buildings to landscapes to virtual worlds—through objects and images made with digital visualization and fabrication technologies. His interactive *Marching Cubes* performances and installations have been featured in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Mexico City, Stockholm, Tehran, and across America. Jackson is Professor of Electronic Art & Design at the University of California, Irvine, in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, where he also serves as Associate Dean for Research and Innovation and Executive Director of the Beall Center for Art + Technology. His website is

<http://jessecolinjackson.com>

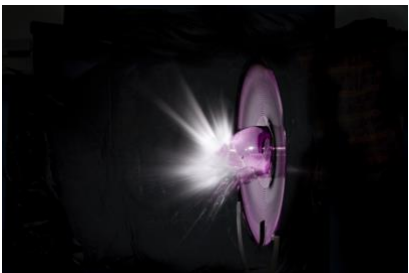
About the Beall Center for Art + Technology

The Beall Center is an exhibition and research center located at the University of California, Irvine, in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. Since its opening in 2000, the Beall Center has promoted new forms of creation and expression by building innovative scholarly relationships and community collaborations among artists, scientists, and technologists and by encouraging research and development of art forms that can affect the future. For artists, the Beall Center serves as a proving ground – a place between the artist’s studio and the art museum – and allows them to work with new technologies in their early stages of development. For visitors, the Beall Center serves as a window to the most imaginative and creative visual arts innovations. The curatorial focus is a diverse range of innovative, world-renowned artists, both national and international, who work with experimental and interactive media. The Beall Center received its initial support from the Rockwell Corp. in honor of retired chairman Don Beall and his wife, Joan – the core idea being to merge their lifelong passions of business, engineering, and the arts in one place. Today major support is generously provided by the Beall Family Foundation. For more information, visit <https://beallcenter.uci.edu>.

About the Claire Trevor School of the Arts

As UCI’s creative engine, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts has proven itself to be a national leader in training future generations of artists and scholars who go on to inspire audiences in theaters, galleries and concert halls – as well as in entertainment and technology-related venues throughout the world. CTSA combines artistic training with a top-ranked liberal arts education. It is home to the departments of art, dance, drama and music, offering 15 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and two minors. CTSA is currently ranked No. 1 in affordable fine arts, drama/theater, and music degrees by the College Affordability Guide. Courses include extensive studio, workshop, and performance experiences; theoretical and historical studies; and arts and technology practices. CTSA’s nationally ranked programs begin with training but culminate in original invention. The distinguished, international faculty work across a wide variety of art forms and forge interdisciplinary partnerships with others across the campus. For more information, visit www.arts.uci.edu.

IMAGES



Rebecca Cummins, *Shooting Stars: Benjamin Moore*, 2007. Digital print, 24 X 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

[Image file](#)



Krista-Leigh Davis, "The Trauma Surrogates", Segment 3 of *No Claim to the Blue-Green Bloom*, 2022. Still image from video. Courtesy of the artist.

[Image file](#)

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Ava Aviva Avnisan

Specters of Home - Prologue, 2024

Single-channel video (9:40) with generative AI animations, archival footage, and 3D lidar scans

Courtesy of the artist

Rebecca Cummins

Shooting Stars: Sean Albert I, 2007

Shooting Stars: Sean Albert II, 2007

Shooting Stars: Dante Marioni, 2007

Shooting Stars: Benjamin Moore, 2007

Digital print

24 x 36 inches each

Courtesy of the artist

Rebecca Cummins

A January day at the Arts Café, UC Irvine, from the series *Café Gnomonics*, 2025

Table, tablecloth, drawing

Courtesy of the artist

Krista-Leigh Davis

No Claim to the Blue-Green Bloom, 2023

Video (22:00)

Courtesy of the artist

Krista-Leigh Davis

Choreographies for Capitalist Ruins, 2023

Video loop (3:00), wooden mirror box

Courtesy of the artist

Krista-Leigh Davis

The Trauma Surrogates, 2023

Wire, paper, cotton gauze, gelatin, tempera

Courtesy of the artist

Yvette Granata and Alina Nazmeeva

Pre-game, 2024

Interactive XR, multimedia

Courtesy of the artist

Catherine Griffiths

Irides

Digital video (5:05) and interactive simulation

Courtesy of the artist

Nina Vroemen

Lessen in Time, 2023

Video (3:22), 3 acetate prints with lead sinkers, 10 low-fired ceramic chemistry flasks seeping iodine from the crazed glaze, paper scroll.

Courtesy of the artist

Jennifer Willet

Gentleman Scientist: Microecologies, 2023-25

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artist

Jiayi Young

Whispers of the Unmade: Seeking Humanity in the Machine, 2025

TPU inflatable tatami mat, oncology mask, LED light, webcam, GenAI computation, computer monitor.

Variable dimensions

Courtesy of the artist