

U.S. Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale to Feature Film and Video Artworks That Expand the Exhibition *Dimensions of Citizenship*

Chicago, IL, December 14, 2017—The curators of *Dimensions of Citizenship*, the U.S. Pavilion exhibition at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, today announced that they will present film and video works that explore multiple perspectives—narrative, speculative, or impressionistic—in the pavilion’s rotunda. Entitled “Transit Screening Lounge,” this collection features recent single-channel works by **Frances Bodomo, Mandana Moghaddam, David Rueter and Marissa Lee Benedict, Mika Rottenberg, and Liam Young**. As reflections on the spatial conditions of citizenship, these evocative works join installations by the Pavilion’s seven commissioned participants: Amanda Williams & Andres L. Hernandez, Design Earth, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman, Keller Easterling, SCAPE, and Studio Gang.

The commissioners of the 2018 U.S. Pavilion are the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago.

Curators Niall Atkinson, Ann Lui, and Mimi Zeiger said, “While each of the installations commissioned from the architects and designers will consider what it means to belong at different and specific spatial scales, the ‘Transit Screening Lounge’ will offer more ambiguous readings of contemporary citizenship, involving blurred boundaries, gray areas, and alternative histories. The selected works look at citizenship through a lens of movement: migration, transgression, transmission, travel, and mobility, as a way to visualize conditions that can be difficult to delineate through traditional architectural means.”

The following films and videos have been selected for the U.S. Pavilion:

***Afronauts* (2014)**

Frances Bodomo

It's July 16, 1969, and the U.S. is preparing to launch Apollo 11. Thousands of miles away, the Zambia Space Academy is hoping to beat America to the moon. Inspired by true events.

Frances Bodomo, born in Accra in 1988, is an award-winning Ghanaian filmmaker. Her two short films *Boneshaker* (2013) and *Afronauts* premiered at the Sundance Film



Festival and went on to play at several other major festivals, including the Berlin International Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival, and SXSW Film Festival. *Afronauts* was also exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art as part of the group show *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016*. Bodomo is currently developing the feature film version of *Afronauts*.

***Exodus* (2012)**

Mandana Moghaddam

Borrowing a title best known from the Bible, *Exodus* addresses the mass flight of people across the world in the wake of war, poverty, and social injustice. Through images of luggage adrift at sea, the video evokes the sense of being uprooted, losing one's identity, and having to fight for one's integrity.



Mandana Moghaddam, born in Tehran in 1962, is an Iranian-Swedish contemporary visual artist whose installation work was most notably exhibited in the 51st Venice Biennale. Following the Iranian Revolution, Moghaddam was granted asylum in Gothenburg, Sweden, where she continues to maintain her studio. Her work, which examines themes such as alienation, communication, and gender, attempts to bridge boundaries, inspire intercultural dialogue, and memorialize oftentimes contentious aspects of Iranian life.

***Dark Fiber* (2015)**

David Rueter and Marissa Lee Benedict

Tunneling through commercial and industrial fiber optic networks and traveling in their shadows, *Dark Fiber* follows the course of a single cable, in a video that pushes against conventional representations of networks and logistics. The video's montage sequences depict movement between systems and scales as seen in vast landscapes, industrial infrastructure, media apparatuses, art venues, domestic spaces, and imagined worlds.



Marissa Lee Benedict, born in Palm Springs, Calif. in 1985, is a sculptor and writer who currently lectures in visual art. Considering subjects that range from the distillation of algal biodiesel to the extraction of a geologic core sample with a set of gardening tools, her work draws on traditions of American land art to investigate the material conditions of our recently networked world. She earned an MFA in Sculpture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

David Rueter, born in Ann Arbor, Mich. in 1978, is a visual artist, programmer, and assistant professor in art and technology at the University of Oregon. Employing video, custom electronics, software, cartography, and performance, Rueter's experiments and interventions confront established technical systems and their philosophical counterparts, opening cracks for radical

alternatives and imaginations. Rueter is a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's MFA program in Art and Technology Studies.

***Cosmic Generator* (2017)**

Mika Rottenberg

Cosmic Generator explores a kaleidoscopic world in which the U.S. and Mexico are linked by a secret system of tunnels, which enable trade among various places and actors. The tunnels lead from the Golden Dragon Restaurant in Mexicali, Mexico, to a 99 Cents Store in Calexico, California, while an enormous plastic commodities market in Yiwu, China, also plays a role in the imaginary network.



Mika Rottenberg, born in Buenos Aires in 1976, lives and works in New York. Through film, architectural installation, and sculpture, she illuminates the connections among seemingly unrelated economies. Collapsing geographies and narratives, Rottenberg weaves documentary elements with fiction into complex allegories about human conditions and global systems. In 2018, Rottenberg is scheduled to present solo shows at the Bregenz Kunsthouse in Austria, the Bass Museum in Miami, and Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art at the University of London.

***Where the City Can't See* (2016)**

Liam Young

Where the City Can't See is the first narrative fiction film shot entirely with the laser scanning technology used for navigation by self-driving vehicles. In a Chinese-owned and controlled Detroit Economic Zone, a group of young auto workers drifts around in a driverless taxi, searching for a place they know exists but that their car doesn't recognize. They are part of an underground community in which people adorn themselves in machine-vision camouflage and anti-facial recognition masks to enact escapist fantasies in the city's hidden spaces.



Liam Young, born in Brisbane in 1979, lives and works in Los Angeles and London. He is a speculative architect who operates in the spaces between design, fiction and futures. He is cofounder of Tomorrow's Thoughts Today, an urban futures think tank that explores the local and global implications of new technologies, and of Unknown Fields, a nomadic research studio that travels on expeditions to chronicle these emerging conditions as they occur on the ground. He has taught at the Architectural Association and Princeton University and now runs the groundbreaking Master of Arts program in Fiction and Entertainment at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles.

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONERS

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world's most influential artists, designers and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program consistently ranking among the top programs in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC's undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O'Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman.

The University of Chicago

The University of Chicago is a leading academic and research institution that has driven new ways of thinking since its founding in 1890. As an intellectual destination, the University draws scholars and students from around the world to its home in Hyde Park and campuses around the globe. The University provides a distinctive educational experience, empowering individuals to challenge conventional thinking and pursue research that produces new understanding and breakthroughs with global impact. At the University, UChicago Arts, which includes nearly 100 arts organizations, initiatives, and academic programs, brings together the efforts of students, faculty, artists, and community partners to infuse creativity throughout the intellectual life on campus while solidifying the University's role as a cultural destination and resource on Chicago's South Side.

ABOUT THE U.S. PAVILION

The U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was built in 1930 and designed by architects William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation acquired the U.S. Pavilion in 1986, and now manages it through the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, with the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for the U.S. Department of State.

ABOUT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND THE U.S. EMBASSY IN ROME

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchange programs, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. ECA programs build connections that engage and empower people and motivate them to become leaders and thinkers; to develop new skills; and to find connections that will create positive change in their communities. Alumni of ECA exchange programs comprise more than one million people around the world, including more than 80 Nobel Laureates and more than 500 current or former heads of state and government around the world. For more information: eca.state.gov

ECA also closely collaborates with the U.S. Embassy in Rome, which has long supported the Venice Biennale and has maintained a strong interest in this important opportunity to showcase innovative American architects and artists. For more information: it.usembassy.gov.

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Captions:

1. Still from *Afronauts* (2014), Frances Bodomo. © Frances Bodomo
2. Still from *Exodus* (2015), Mandana Moghaddam. © Mandana Moghaddam
3. Still from *Dark Fiber* (2015), David Rueter and Marissa Lee Benedict. © David Rueter and Marissa Lee Benedict.
4. Still from *Cosmic Generator* (2017), Mika Rottenberg. © Mika Rottenberg
5. Still from *Where the City Can't See* (2016), Liam Young. © Liam Young