This exhibition features two artists—Joiri Minaya of New York and Anne Austin Pearce of California—whose artwork questions the colonial urges and histories around collecting, controlling, and exploiting nature and representation.

Minaya’s ongoing Containers, a series of performative photographs on view in The Carriers, feature the artist in natural environments wearing bodysuits she makes out of fabric with designs representing tropical nature. Minaya’s work often utilizes ‘the tropical’ as a critique of colonialism and as a means to locate and reclaim agency. Historically constructed by colonial desires, the tropical is now a kind of universal ready-made: decorative, interchangeable, and disposable branding. Minaya’s inhabited exploration of the performativity of tropical identity as a product destabilizes and shifts historical and contemporary representations of imagined tropical identities.

Pearce’s small sculptures on view in The Carriers exist somewhere between decorative glass vessels and emollient blobs. As if the after-effects of an oil spill, dozens of these art objects suggest humanity’s endless suffocation and consumption of nature through containment. Natural debris like shells, sticks, and stones are embedded in each of the vessel-like sculptures, which appear at once ensnared and memorialized. Pearce’s work often draws attention to the exploitative human tendencies to pull apart and collect the natural world while also building on definitions of eco-colonialism and empathy.

Together, these two bodies of work engage questions surrounding ethics and aesthetics of contemporary ecology, as well as the assumed vessel that is humanity. The artists ultimately ask: What is consumed or preserved and under whose authority?

Joiri Minaya (b.1990) is a Dominican–United Statesian multi-disciplinary artist whose work investigates the female body within constructions of identity, multicultural social spaces, and hierarchies. She was born in New York and grew up in the Dominican Republic. She graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Artes Visuales of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, the Altos de Chavón School of Design, and Parsons the New School for Design. She has

1. Joiri Minaya Container #7, 2020. Archival pigment print. 40 x 60 in
participated in residencies like Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Guttenberg Arts, Smack Mellon, BronxArtSpace, Bronx Museum’s AIM Program, the NYFA Mentoring Program for Immigrant Artists, Transmedia Lab at MA Scène Nationale, Red Bull House of Art Detroit, Lower East Side Printshop Keyholder Artist, Socrates Sculpture Park, Art Omi, and Vermont Studio Center.

Anne Austin Pearce (b.1968) is an artist whose work explores the natural world, especially as it relates to form, color, and ecosystems. Before receiving an MFA in drawing and painting at James Madison University, she was born in Lawrence, Kansas, and studied Studio Art at the Kansas City Art Institute, Brighton Polytechnic, and the University of Kansas. Pearce is currently Associate Professor of Studio Art and Director of Creative Arts Program at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, CA. She has exhibited at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; Corcoran School of Art and Design, Washington D.C.; Drawing Center, New York City; Museum of Art + Design Miami, FL; Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO; and Bradbury Museum, Jonesboro, AK; among other venues. Pearce is a 2012 Charlotte Street Foundation Visual Artist Award Fellow and has paintings in the permanent collections of the Nerman Museum of Art, Overland Park, KS; Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS; and University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO; in addition to numerous private collections.

The Carriers is organized by Kate McNamara, PCG’s Curator at Large.

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