

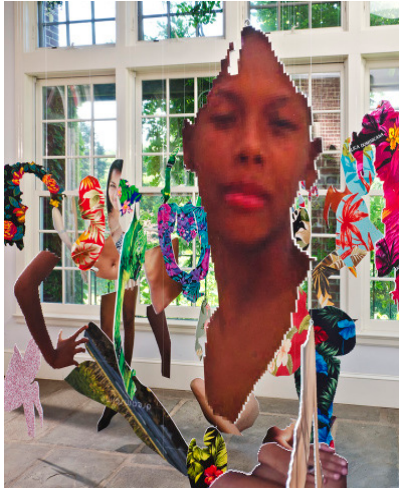
The background of the entire image is a light blue color. It is decorated with numerous abstract, organic shapes in various colors including red, yellow, green, blue, orange, pink, and grey. These shapes are scattered across the canvas, with a higher concentration on the left side and some near the text elements.

The Carriers: Joiri Minaya & Anne Austin Pearce

10.27-
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Providence
College
Galleries



Joiri Minaya.
#dominicanwomengooglesearch
Installation at Wave Hill Sunroom
Project Space, Bronx, NY
(July 12 - Sept 5, 2016).
Photo credit: Stefan Hagen.



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Joiri Minaya.
Container #3, 2017.
Archival pigment print, 40 x 60 in

In the late Ursula K. Le Guin's influential 1986 essay *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, the science-fiction author reimagines the story of human origin by re-centering early technology on the 'cultural carrier bag,' shifting focus away from the primacy of the hunter's spear. For Le Guin, such weapons of domination are exactly that—brutal, linear accessories of patriarchy and colonization. Instead, this recast carrier, such as a shell, gourd, or vessel, represents the generative strategy that is gathering. She understands the act of gathering as a method of storytelling, the refusal of a central “hero,” and a (re)configuring of worlds. She insists that gathering stories and creating intersectional narratives can bring realities into being and subsequently lead to new approaches of shared ritual. Furthermore, Le Guin emphasizes how communities already write alternative stories—they have been crafting them for a long time in their resistance against the dominant story of imperialist violence and oppression. Directly citing Le Guin's essay, the exhibition *The Carriers* brings together the intergenerational and multi-disciplinary work of artists Joiri Minaya (b. 1990) and Anne Austin Pearce (b. 1968), whose art practices endeavor to unpack the colonial urges and histories around collecting, controlling, and exploiting Nature.

The Carriers: Joiri Minaya and Anne Austin Pearce

Minaya's ongoing *Containers*, a series of performative photographs initiated in 2015 and on view in *The Carriers*, features the artist wearing bodysuits constructed from fabric of highly patterned prints of tropical plants. Wearing these head-to-toe bodysuits, Minaya situates herself in tropical settings amidst flora, shorelines, and rivers. The patterned bodysuits envelop every part of the artist's body, blending into the landscape like camouflage. Like Hawaiian shirts often found in tourist gift shops and colorful floral caftans sold at beach resorts, the bodysuits and their patterns perform as an exploitative botanical archive of Western imperialism.

Historically constructed by colonial desires, 'the tropical' has become a meta-ready-made: decorative, interchangeable, and a vessel for disposable branding. Minaya's work uses the tropical to



Anne Austin Pearce
Burned and Blue 3, 2015
 Acrylic and ink on paper



Anne Austin Pearce
Leaving Alone (detail)
 2017



Anne Austin Pearce
 Attribution TBD

critique colonialism and as a means to locate and reclaim agency. Her performance of camouflage evokes both the hyper-visibility and invisibility of women in the tropics, as imagined from a colonized gaze. She pushes the performative even further, posing in the photographs in ways that directly reference what's pictured in the results of a Google image search of "Dominican women."*

The artworks beg the question, How accurate are these images assembled through databases and search engines? The images in the search, and therefore in Minaya's work, mimic the exotic fantasies cultivated through the supposedly "neutral" A.I. lens. With her poses in *Containers*, Minaya's repossesses representations of Dominican women in an exploration on how identity destabilizes and shifts historical and contemporary issues of representation.

Pearce's small sculptures, which run through the middle of the exhibition, exist somewhere between decorative glass vessels and emollient blobs. Natural debris like shells, sticks, and stones are embedded in each of the vessel-like sculptures, which appear at once ensnared and memorialized. Central to Pearce's investigation is a deep interest in reconfiguring human relationships to Earth and all its living inhabitants. She has traveled the world, observing landscapes and eco-systems—especially those which are tropical—that has suffered various levels of exploitation and extraction through colonial and Capitalistic practices. Her work draws attention to the human tendency to isolate, pull apart, and exploit the natural world, while also examining the conflicting realms of eco-colonialism and empathy.

For Pearce, glass is the perfect material to gather, carry, and ultimately display the natural ephemera she stores and reflects upon. The vessels are both the captor and the contained, a visual reference of this Anthropocene-era in which humans are centered as the dominant influence of the Earth's climate dynamics. But, echoing Indigenous knowledge, the artist aims to break down this human-topped hierarchy. She uses her fantastical glass forms to imagine an alternate system of interspecies collaboration, wherein artistic strategies stimulate dialogue about possibilities for human and non-human animals to work together in Nature and going forward. Pearce is a species-maker activating what eco-feminist Donna Haraway terms "tentacular thinking," in her 2016 book *Staying with the Trouble*. The tentacular tangles and intertwines; it is an emergent strategy in which humans, animals and plants are called to think collectively

*In 2016, Minaya made another artwork, entitled "#dominican-womengooglesearch," which consisted of various cardboard cutouts of images resulting from a Google search. *Containers* build on the artist's research for the earlier work.





Joiri Minaya.
Container #6, 2020.
 Archival pigment print, 40 x 60 in



Joiri Minaya.
Container #4, 2020.
 Archival pigment print, 40 x 60 in



Anne Austin Pearce
 Attribution TBD

Previous Spread
 Anne Austin Pearce
 Attribution TBD

and combine old and new stories to imagine the unknown. Like Le Guin's carrier bags and Haraway's tentacles, Pearce's vessels are in themselves hybrid-creatures offering an alternative path forward.

Introducing a refrain for the Anthropocene, Haraway writes:

*"It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories."*¹

1. Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.

In a cultural and environmental moment when alternative stories and new worlds are needed more than ever, Minaya and Pearce propose strategies that shift, dismantle, and rupture. They begin to imagine the unimaginable. 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: In this carrier bag, what is consumed, preserved, stored, and destroyed, and under whose authority?

Kate McNamara, PCG Curator at Large

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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 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.– Kate McNamara, Curator at Large, Providence College Galleries

ABOUT PCG

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE GALLERIES [PCG] is the only visual arts institution in Rhode Island committed entirely to museum-quality presentations of the art and artists of our time. PCG showcases contemporary art to advance Providence College’s mission to cultivate “aesthetic appreciation, and understanding of the natural world, other cultures, and diverse traditions” while promoting “the common good and service of neighbors near and far.”

PCG operates within two exhibition spaces, on a multi-platform website, across the College’s campus, and within the public sphere throughout the city of Providence. PCG’s activities include collecting and commissioning art, organizing exhibitions and public art displays, publishing texts, hosting artist residencies, presenting public programs and events, and advocating for local artists and art communities. PCG supports the educational, service, and community-oriented goals of the College by showing how and why artists are vital forces in shaping contemporary culture.

The Carriers is organized by Kate McNamara, PCG’s Curator at Large, with assistance from PC/PCG staff Scott Alario, Paul Bienvenue, Elizabeth Corkery, Angela Crenshaw, Janice DiLustro, Jamilee Lacy, and Matthew Patrei and current students Zari Apodaca (PC’23), Jalynn Booker (PC’22), Chloe Catalini (PC’23), Crosby Coyer (PC’23), Aariyan Davis (PC’24), Emma Fuscclaro (PC’25), Hilary Nestor (PC’24), and Quan Tran (PC’23).

Providence College Galleries
—Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery at Hunt-Cavanagh Hall,
—Reilly Gallery at the Smith Center for the Arts
Providence College, Providence, RI 02918

401.865.2400
pcgalleries@providence.edu
pcgalleries.providence.edu