

focus

CASEY MCGUIRE



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA



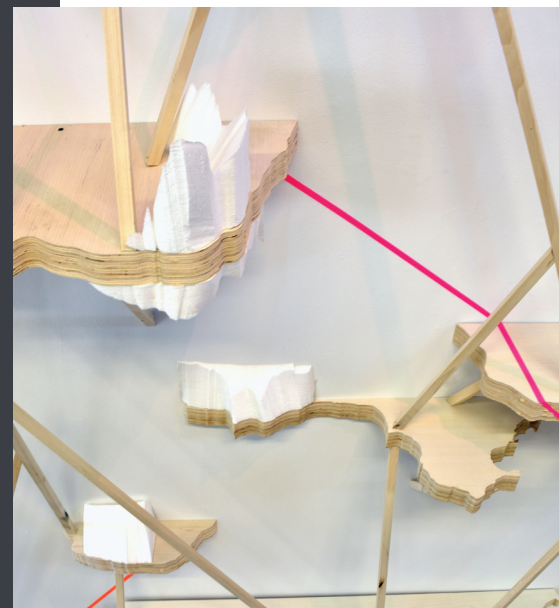
Casey McGuire earned a BFA from Alfred University and an MFA in sculpture from the University of Colorado, Boulder. The daughter of a taxidermist and decoy carver in rural Vermont, McGuire began creating objects at an early age. As her technique and thinking matured, she applied her sculptural imagination to questions of home, the damaging human impact on the environment, and the politicization of natural landmarks. McGuire is currently in residence at the Studio Artist Program of the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center. She serves as Professor of Art at UWG.



Rick McGuire, Casey's father



Casey McGuire, age nine, with her father in his decoy workshop



This work, displayed at the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center, explores the political dimensions of land ownership; the problem of foam, microplastics, and other industrial waste in our environment; and the fragile interconnectivity of the Earth's ecosystems. The installation centers on five politically charged bodies of land: Mount Rushmore, Plymouth Rock, the Bikini Atoll (site of nearly two dozen nuclear tests by the United States in the Marshall Islands after WWII), Laucala Island (the private island resort in Fiji owned by billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz), and The Lonely Rock (a geological wonder off the northern coast of Bulgaria where Red Bull, the energy-drink corporation co-founded by Mateschitz, sponsors cliff-diving exhibitions). Brightly painted representations of landscape flagging connect the various rock formations, each made of industrial foam. As a whole, the sculpture suggests lives and lands on the brink of collapse, yet still held together by threads of possibility and hope.

I saw the Studio Artist's Wall—which is nine feet wide and thirteen feet tall—as an opportunity to push my work, to make a new piece that would expand beyond the smaller works than I had been doing. When I applied for a studio at the Contemporary, I had been showing nationally at a lot of universities and non-profit galleries, and I wanted to find a way to push my career beyond that, to find the next level and become part of a larger community of artists whose work hangs in museums and cultural arts centers like the Contemporary. I was deeply honored that the jurors for the Studio Artist Program—all well-known artists and curators in Atlanta—decided that my work stood out from the large pool of applicants.

"Teetering Scaffolds" (2022)



McGuire in her studio at the Atlanta Contemporary



"Precipice" (2019)

I've been thinking recently about strata and layering, about outlines and silhouettes, and about the ways in which modern human cultures exploit the earth. I also think a lot about rocks as non-renewable resources, and how we use them often as decoration. We've all seen those huge rocks on our neighbors' front lawns. But we don't always wonder where the rocks come from, or how they've been harvested, or what absences have been left behind. A lot of my current sculpture explores the place of rock in contemporary American culture, from the domestic sphere of landscape décor to larger monuments such as Plymouth Rock and Mount Rushmore.



"Silent Spring" (2019)

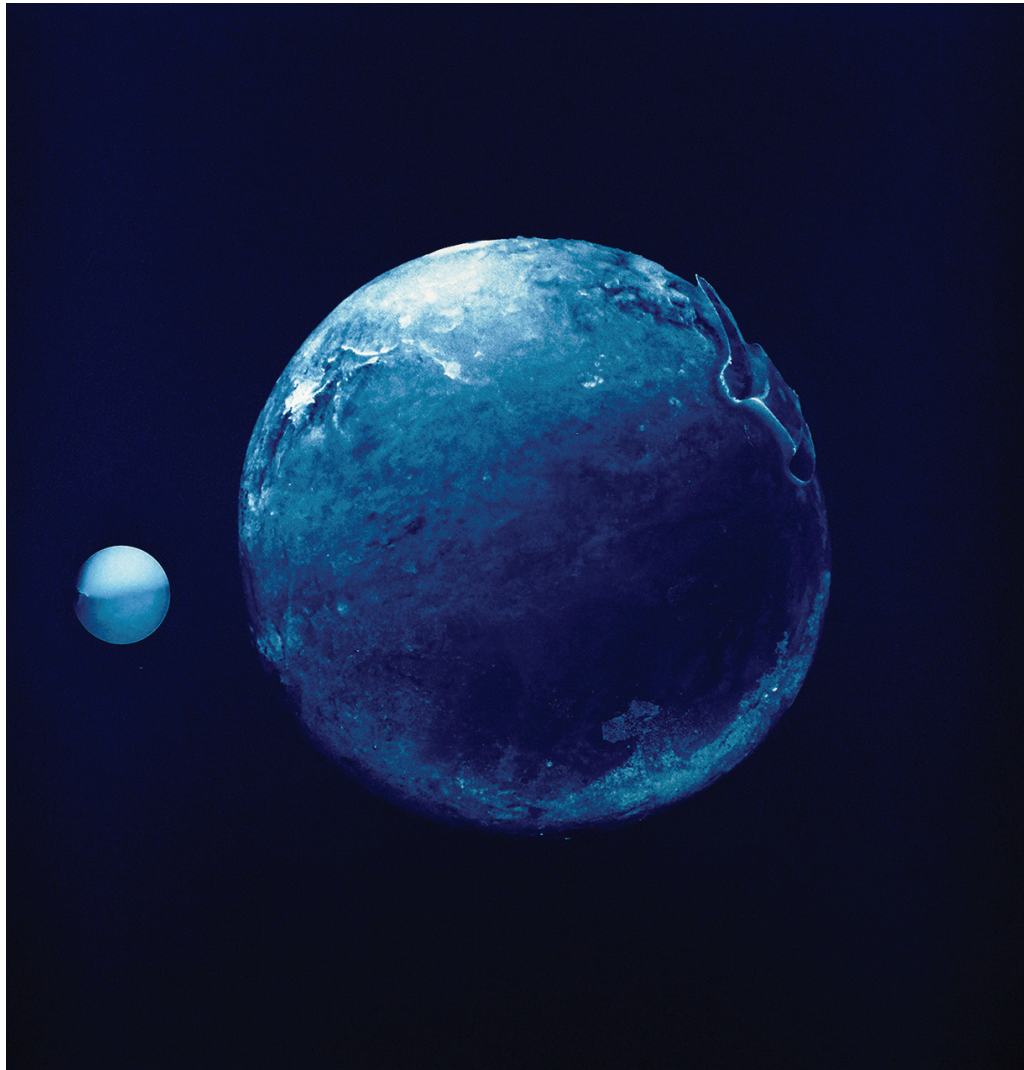
It was a spring without voices. On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens and scores of other birds there was no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (1962)

Helping her father on duck decoys as a kid moved McGuire first into painting, but in art school she became more and more fascinated with preservation, which derived from her father's work as a taxidermist. She started to pay more attention to preservations of the dead, and began to think of art in more elegiac and memorial terms. Sculpture suited that sensibility perfectly. In projects such as "Silent Spring," McGuire pays homage to Rachel Carson's own urgent drive toward preservation and conservation.



"Migratory Restlessness" (2019)



"Silver and Gold" (in collaboration with Mark Schoon, 2016)

I have worked with Casey McGuire as a colleague for the past decade and continually witness her deep engagement and innovative approach to teaching and art making. She challenges students to move beyond what they believe they are capable of and supports them in their most critical and challenging moments of learning. In addition to our collegial relationship at the university, we have worked as collaborative partners in artmaking for the better part of seven years. Casey's insight, creativity, and enthusiasm in the studio continually push our collective work into new territory. She embraces and reinforces the spirit of collaboration in its most pure and crucial form.

Mark Schoon
Professor of Art - Photography



"London, Ontario" (2017)



I grew up on a small farm with a variety of animals, in a mountain town of 1,100 in central Vermont. The surrounding area is full of lakes, rivers, and gorges and inhabited by ducks, wild turkeys, moose, and deer. Swimming, fishing, and hunting are popular activities, and taxidermy is a common profession. I bring elements of this outdoor environment and its associated architectural structures and cultural pursuits into my indoor work, often alluding to water, constructing small buildings, and casting models of fish or parts of horses. The deer head in "London, Ontario" is one that my father preserved through taxidermy.



"Terrestrial Apparatus Poised for Lights Out" (2010)

McGuire presents the viewer with a wooden structure positioned in a precarious situation. Made of salvaged materials from abandoned homes and foreclosure renovations in her local surroundings, including a TV antenna, the structure is described as a "box trap." Propped up on a stick and connected to a rope, the viewer is "lured" in closer in hopes to "trap" her in this strange housing situation. The strategy used for trapping the viewer is soft playback, soft enough that the viewer has to lean her head up inside the box, of Elton John's "Tiny Dancer," for McGuire a "tongue-in-cheek" response to the nostalgia that she references—"American dreams based on structure and home and the decaying reality of these ideals." The inclusion of the antenna on the roof of this "box trap" points to the disposability of technologies. In a time when all things globalized promote telecommunications as a way to secure one's place everywhere and nowhere, this antenna forces us to consider our communication choices.

Meredith Kooi, *Bad at Sports*, March 27, 2014



"The Levitating Quality of Light Through Closed Eyes" (2008)

This installation consisted of two wooden ice shanties on 16-foot ski runners elevated on concrete blocks; an aluminum replica of a child's inflatable swimming pool with a nylon polyester screen stretched across its interior; and a lawn chair re-woven with thin vellum and suspended from the ceiling. Twelve fishing poles of different sizes fitted with light sockets were mounted on the walls, hovering over the installation. In one shanty, a brown plaster-cast trout was displayed near a hole cut out of the floor. Shanties are temporary shelters: they protect you during long days of ice fishing, and clustered on Lake Champlain; they resemble tiny communities. My father and I have gone ice fishing and trolling together since I was little, and all the poles in this work were from his collection, including the one I used as a child. The lighting design evoked the way we hang gas lanterns over the sides of the boat during night fishing, to attract fish to the surface. Ideally the light functioned as a lure, drawing visitors into the space. The experience of light within a darkened shanty is amazing. You can see very clearly into the lake through the hole in the ice, and the light has an almost physical presence. I built the shanties to scale in my studio and fitted their undersides with fluorescent fixtures so they would glow like frozen blue lakes.



The classes I teach typically have a “material exploration” focus—my students and I work an assortment of materials—but in addition, we use computer technologies to expand our possibilities and break new creative ground.



Résumé: Casey McGuire

Recent Solo Shows

Teetering Scaffolds

Studio Artist Wall, Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center (2022)

Analogue Landscapes: Beyond the Lunar Vision

Georgia Southern University, Savannah, GA (2021)

Bolivar Art Gallery, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY (2020)

Silent Spring

621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL (2019)

Alexander Brest Gallery, Jacksonville, FL (2019)

The Great Moon Hoax

Gallery 121, Belmont University, Nashville, TN (2019)

The Beverly + Sam Ross, Christian Brothers, Memphis, TN (2019)

Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA (2019)

Hardman Hall Gallery, Mercer University, Macon, GA (2018)

Winds of Ancestry

Overbrook Gallery, Muskegon MI (2017)

Selected Honors & Awards

Decatur Arts Festival Competition, Dalton Gallery, Agnes Scott College, Atlanta, GA, First Place Award, with Mark Schoon (2019)

13th Annual National Alternative Processes Competition, Soho Photo Gallery, New York, NY, Second Place Award, with Mark Schoon (2017)

Featured Artist, *Sculpture Magazine* (October 2009)

Joan Mitchell Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT (2009)

International Sculpture Center's Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award, Honorable Mention, *Sand Mandala Series* (2005)

On the Web

For more images and information, visit: <http://www.caseymaymcguire.com/>

UWG Art Program



The UWG Art Program is home to a community of artists, historians, and educators who believe creative expression is the foundation for learning. Graduates of the program are graphic designers at Southwire, at The Home Depot corporate headquarters, and at many other successful businesses. Award-winning Studio Art majors have shown work at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia and other prestigious institutions. In addition to creative and critical thinking, Art teaches time management, work ethic, and other life skills to help students succeed long after graduation.



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